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BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE.

No. MCCLXIII. JANUARY 1921. Vol. CCIX.

THE LITTLE ROCK OF THE DANCING.

I.

Michael Dinneen's cottage in Carrigarinka village wore a deserted look when I passed it on my way to the railway junction. Not that it ever looked particularly comfortable or prosperous, nor, indeed, could Dinneen himself be described in these terms.

An ex-soldier, who had lost an arm in the war, he was a comparatively recent settler in the village, driven there, it was reported, by ill-treatment received in his native place, which happened to be fiercely Sinn Fein and pro-German. I gathered he was popular in his new home. His neighbours treated him with cautious friendliness. He managed to obtain employment in the telegraph office in a country town three miles off, and went his way unmolested.

As I drove my car down the village street I realised that Carrigarinka was keeping a compulsory holiday—the third within the week. From at least one window in every house a Sinn Fein flag hung limply in the mild spring air; even the whitewashed wall round the pump was enlivened by stripes of green and yellow paint. In the distance I could see the limestone crag known as the little rock of the dancing, with a defiantly large flag tied to a stunted tree on its summit. The rock itself was a landmark visible for many miles. In the field below the country people formerly assembled for games and dancing. Later, the rock overlooked less innocent occupations, for, when not detained at the nation's expense, the chief Sinn Feiner of the district, one Teige O'Leary (or, as he patriotically rendered it, Tadg Laeghire), lived beneath its shelter.

W.F.S.

Perhaps when compulsory a holiday loses some of its charm. Beyond the display of flags, I could see no particular signs of rejoicing. Indeed, most of the inhabitants appeared distinctly glum. The closing of the two public-houses—contrary to the usual holiday custom—might have caused some depression; but it is more likely that the men, mostly small landholders and working farmers, were uncomfortably aware that their farms must suffer from continual enforced holidays at the busy spring season, and that arrears of work were accumulating which they could scarcely hope to get even with.

And they had yet another reason for secret dismay. The holiday, ordered by Sinn Fein authorities, celebrated the release of hunger-striking political prisoners—men suspected of connivance and responsibility in murders and outrages which were condemned by all except a small band of extremists. Yet not one of the Carrigarinka villagers would have dared express disapproval of the release any more than he would have ventured to work that day. Each man feared his neighbour and mistrusted his oldest friend. Those whose fears were keenest flew the largest flags and flaunted their patriotic badges the most obtrusively.

I stopped my car at the post-office near the end of the long straggling street.

Inside I found Mrs Moylan, the postmistress, and her daughter Bridgie engaged in low-voiced conversation with two neighbours. The latter, drawing their shawls over their heads, departed quietly through the back door. Bridgie and her mother turned perturbed yet expectant faces to me. Evidently my visit betokened something of more interest than a request for stamps. It was evident, too, that Bridgie Moylan had been crying.

Mrs Moylan, bending low as she handed the change, murmured apparently to the counter—

"Did ye get anny account of Mike Dinneen? The poor fellow——"

She stopped abruptly and busied herself with the stamp drawer. I saw that a young man carrying a rebel flag had entered the little shop.

He belonged to a type which has come into existence in Ireland during the last few years—undefinable as to class, well dressed, well drilled, exuding arrogance and self-satisfaction. No vestige of the national indolence clings to the exponents of this type, and they have lost all traces of the national good nature. Indeed, they seem to have acquired something of the bearing that characterised their "glorious German ally."

He made no attempt to remove his hat in my presence, though he stepped aside perfunctorily to allow me to pass, dispelling any illusion of politeness by raising his flag and giving it an aggressive flutter.

His expression openly indicated contempt for my class, and triumph at the Government's latest surrender to Sinn Fein.

I drove away feeling ruffled, for when one's curiosity is aroused it is annoying to be unable to gratify it, and doubly so when the hindrance is in itself objectionable.

I resolved to call again at the post-office on my way home and find out more about Mike Dinneen.

But ill-luck pursued me that afternoon. Owing to the holiday the parcels office at the railway junction was closed, so I was unable to transact my business. Nor did I succeed in questioning Mrs Moylan about Dinneen, for I did not get within two miles of Carrigarinka.

At the steepest pitch of a long hill leading to the cross-roads surmounted by the little rock of the dancing, there was a swishing sound in the bushes by the roadside. Four men with blackened faces sprang out, and raising revolvers barred my way. I had no choice but to apply the brakes. A fifth man, tall and well-dressed, wearing a black cloth mask, stepped leisurely from the fir plantation opposite. At a sign from him I was pulled unceremoniously out of the car. I stood in the road with a revolver against each side of my head. The muzzles felt cold and very hard.

I was both angry and startled, but anger had the upper hand.

"Let ye be quiet and ye'll not be hurted," said one of the men warningly. I realised it would be futile to struggle, and submitted to being placed on the bank beneath the fir-trees.

The leader examined the car in a rapid and practical manner. He experimented with the gears and self-starter, glanced into the petrol tank, and pronounced himself satisfied.

"The Republic requires the use of your car," he said coolly; "we have no objection to your returning home on foot. You may spare yourself the trouble of ringing up the police or the military, because the wires have been cut."

His voice was brisk and decisive, with a slight hint of an American twang.

His companions replaced their revolvers in side-pockets, and packed themselves into the car. The ease with which the leader started it against the steep hill showed he was well accustomed to the work.

A few minutes later the sound of the engine had died away round a bend in the road, and I was alone with my helpless fury.

Such episodes are common in Ireland. But though one hears of them continually, one scarcely expects to experience them oneself. The civilised habit of mind still persists, though the country is overrun by forces of disorder. Consequently my anger was mingled with a sense of unreality. I was obliged to lay my bare hand over the moss-covered

stones on the bank, and I stared hard at the fir-trees and bright green fields to convince myself I was really awake.

My shortest way home lay across country. In any other circumstances I should have enjoyed the walk down the sloping fields overlooking wide brown bog-lands, now transformed by the evening light into a fairy realm of soft and glowing colours.

That fairies really exist is a common belief in Ireland. In spring, when the leprechaun's gold is spread over the furze bushes, when bare rocks are transformed into opals and every ridge of hill holds its own rainbow, it is easy to share this belief.

With the country people, however, the unseen world, whether of fairies or ancient gods or Christian saints, is always close at hand—a concrete fact to be reckoned with in daily life. And it is said that even some up-to-date patriots who have shaken off the restraints of religion have been unable to free themselves from a disquieting belief in fairies.

The path wound downwards amongst rough boulders of granite to a sheltered hollow, where bluebells spread like a mist over the steep sides of an ancient rath.

A voice came unexpectedly from the rath, expressing a fervent hope that the speaker might meet me in heaven, and adding sadly that it would be a bad place if none of the old stock of gentry were found there.

Old Bat Cronin, who owned the adjacent farm, was standing, hat in hand, just above me on the slope of the rath.

His shrewd grey eyes surveyed me keenly, noting, no doubt, the cumbrous fur coat and motor gauntlets with which I was burdened.

"Faith, the gintry is bothered by their convaniences," he said earnestly as he replaced his hat.

I noticed a knot of Sinn Fein colours pinned to the soft crown. Yet Cronin's loyalty was above suspicion, and he had lost two sons in the war.

"There's some that rides horses and motor-cars that has a right to it," he announced in the well-modulated tones of a practised orator. "But there's some that's not good enough to be riding a donkey, and, faith, 'tis themselves does be sitting aisy in the motor-cars in place of the quality."

Experience had taught me the impossibility of checking Bat Cronin's eloquence. I sat down on a boulder and let him have his say uninterrupted.

"'Tis the notions they'd be collecting that'd destroy the country entirely," he went on, coming nearer, and lowering his voice. "Their thrade unions and sthrikes and republican holidays! Tell me, ma'am, did ye ever hear the like of three holidays in the week, and the crows and pigeons to be ating the mangolds and seeds on account of

them Sinn Feiners not laving us a gun to shoot with? What will we be coming to at all—tell me, now? And tell me," he added in a whisper, "did ye get anny account of Mike Dinneen?"

I tried to appear indifferent, knowing I might defeat my own ends if I betrayed much curiosity.

I told him vaguely that I understood Mike Dinneen had been hurt.

Cronin clenched his right fist and thumped vigorously upon the palm of his left hand.

"*He's been done to death*, ma'am," he hissed between closed teeth.

The tale that followed, however, made it clear that, though badly injured, Dinneen at any rate was still alive; and there even was some prospect of his recovery. All had gone well with him until the hunger-strike of political prisoners. Then a national strike or holiday being ordered by Sinn Fein, work ceased everywhere, even in some Government offices.

Dinneen, however, stuck to his post throughout, and at night snatched what sleep he could on the floor of the telegraph office.

On the third day, with the news that the Government had capitulated, the strike ended, and Dinneen's troubles began. In spite of an urgent message from the postmaster to the authorities, no protection was available for Dinneen. Upon leaving the office in the evening he found an angry crowd assembled, who hissed him through the streets. Outside the town threats turned to action. Dinneen was pelted with stones and mud, and finally knocked down and beaten with heavy blackthorns. He lay by the roadside till a passing car chanced on him and conveyed him to hospital.

"He thought to screech when he heard the motor coming," said Cronin; "but the teeth was rattling about his head, and anny attempt he'd make would be apt to drive them back on him down his throat. The people that was watching him from the windows thought he'd be dead every minute from the bating he had and the way he was lying with his head below in the ditch."

"Do you mean to say that though there were people actually watching him from the windows, nobody went out to help him?" I asked incredulously.

"That's thrue, ma'am," replied Cronin with composure. "Sure, they thought he'd be stretched for a corpse and no throuble at all about it. Mind now, I'm not saying they hadn't a right to call a priest, but, bedad, they were in dread even to do that."

"Cowards!" I exclaimed.

Cronin continued in tones of mild reproof.

"Indeed, ma'am, 'tisn't everybody is an officer's widow and 'ud have the courage that yourself has! Sure, the neighbours does be in dread all the

time, and I never goes along the road meself without looking this way and that and expecting to lose me life! What can we do at all with them Sinn Fein blagyards spying on us, and they with their balls of death handy to be pelting us day or night? Maybe 'tis your farm or your motor-car or your life they'd be wanting, and, faith, 'tis aiqual to them what they'd take."

"That's quite true, Cronin," I said; "we all hold our possessions on sufferance—Sinn Fein sufferance. But the Government ought to provide protection for special cases."

He waved his hand in the direction of his farm.

"Twenty years back the fairies put a pishogue on me land," he said with apparent irrelevance. "Divil a decent crop ever came off it since, and the bastes—the creatures! not ating what'd keep the life in them! And indeed, ma'am, I'm thinking 'twas a good turn the fairies done me, for 'tis the dread of the pishogue that does be previnting the Sinn Feiners from taking me farm. Believe me, the fairies'd give ye better protection than ever ye'd get from the English Governmint."

In the face of his utter seriousness it was impossible to laugh.

"We must look after Dinneen when he comes out of hospital," I said, rising from the boulder and gathering up my coat. "I shall be in England for the next few weeks, but do you keep your ears open while I'm away."

I nodded good-night to the old man.

He took off his hat again, holding it against his chest with the Sinn Fein badge discreetly hidden.

"Me own two boys is dead and buried, glory be to God," he said solemnly. "They died under the flag, and, indeed, they're safe where they are. But wouldn't it be very unthankful of me if I didn't be helping them soldiers that's living yet—yes, and be cursing their torminters? God bless all the poor brave fellows, and may the divil catch the others with a curse on their black souls and roast every one of them the same as ye'd roast a potato."

Glancing round, I saw him reverently bent, as though in prayer, standing knee-deep in bluebells.

II.

The missing motor was found next day on a road near my house.

An extravagant quantity of mud plastered it both inside and out, bearing witness to the pace and distance it had been driven. There was an unmistakable bullet mark through the back, but beyond this and a few new scratches on the dash-boards, it was uninjured.

I wondered for what murderous enterprise it had been employed, and a sudden repugnance seized me as I looked at it. That very day I sent it to the local auctioneer to be disposed of without reserve. I was not going to keep a car for the convenience of murderers.

. . . . . .

The weeks I spent in England intensified the Irish situation. The Government having affirmed that law and order positively must be re-established, more troops were drafted into the country, and the roads were systematically patrolled. Loyalists were forbidden to keep firearms in their houses; they were warned to "exercise extreme vigilance and caution" in their daily occupations. Curfew regulations were instituted throughout the greater part of Munster; but martial law, which alone could have dealt effectively with the rebels, was not proclaimed. And the campaign of murder and arson continued unabated.

Alighting at the junction on my return, I found the station entrance watched by armed Sinn Feiners, while just across the road a rebel flag flaunted itself from the blackened ruins of the police barracks.

I stowed myself and my luggage upon a shaky old jarvey car, which was anything but an ideal conveyance for a ten-mile drive, and jolted away from the station, inwardly imprecating a Government whose fatuous dealings with rebellion had rendered it inexpedient for a loyalist to own a motor-car.

The sordid little town seemed empty and quiet. Very few children were playing in the street, and none of the usual groups of dishevelled gossipers were gathered round the doorways. Cocks and hens and pigs, wandering at their pleasure in and out of the houses, seemed to have the place to themselves.

From its elevated position at the end of a sloping grassy square the imposing new Roman Catholic Chapel dominated the whole place. Grey and white pigeons wheeled round the steeple. The bell tolled sonorously a few times. Before the last vibration had died away there came a burst of shrill music from the square. It was an unfamiliar tune played triumphantly on Irish pipes. All music has a wonderful power of creating vivid mental pictures, and Irish pipes excel in the art of weird suggestion.

For a moment, while the piper was still out of sight behind the intervening houses, I seemed to have a vision of some dauntless unearthly leader advancing amid the exultant acclamations of his followers.

Then, as we turned the corner, the car-horse shied violently at a burst of flame which shot up with startling suddenness in the middle of the square.

From his insecure seat on my luggage the driver tried to steady him without success;

but the saffron-kilted piper, handing his pipes to a by-stander, sprang forward and seized the bridle. The horse, still quivering and snorting, allowed himself to be brought to a stand.

All the townspeople were assembled in the square watching an immense bonfire burning with noisy spurts and wicked-looking darting flames, and filling the air with a choking acrid smell.

Sinn Fein volunteers moved ostentatiously to and fro making a show of keeping order, though, indeed, the people seemed quiet enough. Just a few shouted and gesticulated excitedly round the fire; many faces, however, showed unmistakable disapproval, and furtive glances of commiseration were directed towards a little group standing apart from the crowd upon the pavement.

Two women in cheap-looking new mourning stared, quietly crying, at the fire. The man who accompanied them seemed rigid from some strong emotion, and just behind, an older woman, with a crape bonnet incongruously surmounting her peasant's cloak and shawl, rocked herself and wailed aloud.

I turned to the car-driver for enlightenment. He replied in a matter-of-fact voice—

"There was a policeman shot dead ere yestherday. They went to bury him now, and the boys cot the hearse and set fire to it on account of he being a thraitor to Ireland."

"Traitor, indeed!" I cried, horrified; "traitors themselves, not only to Ireland, but to civilisation."

The piper at the horse's head looked up. I encountered the glance of dark-grey eyes lit by a sombre fire, which was no mere reflection of the flames of the burning hearse.

"'Tis the English Governmint is the thraitor to civilisation," he said with deep conviction.

He slipped away through the crowd, reappearing with his pipes near the fire, where he called for "three cheers for the Republic, and down with all representatives of the brutal foreign usurper."

"Sure Teige O'Leary is as grand for talk as he is for music," observed the driver admiringly. "He have a tongue that'd lash a dead horse over a Limerick ditch. And he only three weeks out of hospital after the hungry-strike! More power to him, the fine brave patriot!"

"Drive on," I ordered curtly.

My self-control and forbearance would stand no more. Nor could I trust myself to glance again at the little group of mourners, knowing that I could not do anything to help them.

But the thought of them pursued me miserably throughout the homeward drive.

III.

Next morning I wandered round the garden ruefully inspecting the fruit-trees, which presented a most lamentable appearance.

A recent gale laden with salt from the Atlantic had burned and seared both leaves and blossoms. In the whole garden not even a currant-bush had escaped.

The spring of 1920 was the most disastrous on record. Nature and Sinn Fein seemed to vie with each other in wanton and deliberate destruction.

Bat Cronin appeared on the long path between the espaliers. His observant gaze wandered to and fro over the blighted trees.

"Thank God for the potatoes," was his first remark. Voice and manner irresistibly suggested a drowning man clutching at straws.

He had called, he explained, to welcome me home, and he further expressed a wish to "take on a job of work."

With the air of one conferring a favour, he said, "I'm thinking 'twould be as well for me to be thraining the peas for ye, ma'am, the way they'll not get too bold and wild in themselves."

I shrewdly suspected his offer was prompted by something more urgent than a desire that my peas should grow in grace.

And it soon became evident that all he desired was an opportunity for private conversation. The last few weeks, with their increasing record of crime, had left their mark upon him. Words and actions were seasoned with an unwonted restraint. And, indeed, caution in all things had become a necessity. For merely expressing an opinion men were hounded out of Ireland, or even shot, by those who championed complete liberty in all things.

It is always the apostles of freedom who forge the most tyrannical chains.

The tale that Cronin presently related filled me with concern.

Mike Dinneen had been discharged from hospital, only to find that his post in the telegraph office was no longer open to him.

In addition to this misfortune, Sinn Fein, to punish him for having worked during the general strike, arranged that he should be boycotted. The local shopkeepers, though secretly sympathising with him, dared not disobey Sinn Fein. Starvation seemed inevitable.

Mrs Moylan, the Carrigarinka postmistress, at first supplied him secretly with the bare necessities of life. Then, growing more daring, she obtained from the shops a greater quantity of food than her own household required, and passed the surplus on to Dinneen.

"'Tis as likely as not that low-down spalpeen Teige O'Leary that bethrayed them," said Cronin in tones of disgust. "Indeed, the Governmint had a right to let that one die! Three weeks back he was home from the hungry-strike with the uncle he has at the little rock of the dancing. 'Tis where they'd have jigs and reels once, and in the latther days 'tis there maybe the boys 'd be drilling. Teige seen Bridgie Moylan go carrying baskets to Dinneen's cottage, and what did he do at all, only tell the 'officer' of his area. Your honour knows the 'officer,' ma'am? Sure he was hanging about the village the last holiday of the hungry-strike. A grand blagyard with the appairance of a gintleman, and a fine Yankee accent. The 'officer' came to the little rock of the dancing. He was two days staying in old O'Leary's cottage seeking for what he could see. And the neighbours in Carrigarinka wouldn't so much as say good morning to each other, they were that in dread of him! 'Tis said he wanted to get married to Bridgie Moylan; but she always had a wish for real soldiers, and wouldn't be looking at the likes of him. She was taking a couple of loaves to Dinneen one day, and the Sinn Feiners cot her and set her agin the fence in the baun field and cut the hair off her. Ye'd have filled a corn-sack with the grand black hair she had! She'd be keeping the shawl on her head now like Mrs Moylan herself or anny old woman, and the two of them is in dread to send food to Dinneen."

After this Cronin, true to his promise, had bravely given what help he could. Both to avoid observation, and because the distance from his cottage to Dinneen's was considerable, a half-way meeting-place was arranged in an unfrequented glen. Thither Cronin daily conveyed what food he could spare, but it would have been unsafe noticeably to exceed his usual purchases, so Dinneen's ration was necessarily small.

I felt it was indeed time he received more substantial help.

IV.

In the evening I packed a basket of food and set off for the glen. The old farmer accompanied me. It was by his advice that I took this course instead of going direct to Dinneen's cottage. Cronin had said—

"Sure 'tis yourself 'd have a great chance to starve, ma'am, if Teige O'Leary'd catch a sight of ye! Faith, he'd have ye boycotted and no throuble at all about it!"

And I realised he was probably right.

It was a fine but gusty evening late in May. The sun shone brilliantly. In the grass-grown bohereen leading over the crest of the hill the wind scattered hawthorn petals and furze-blossoms till the air seemed full of mingled snow and fire. Here and there an eddy had whirled the blossoms into lines of white and yellow on the vivid green grass.

"The Sinn Fein colours, ma'am!" Bat Cronin said in an awestruck voice. "God help us! is the whole world itself gone Sinn Fein?"

We came round an angle of rocky cliff into the sudden calm of the little glen. Its sheltered banks were sprinkled with flowers — white, pale mauve, and gold — shining through the rain-like growth of young grass. A brown and silver stream led downwards to a tranquil pool. Here a tall horse-chestnut tree stood full in the evening sunshine. The salt gales from the sea must have touched this tree just when its leaves were unfolding, for the upper branches hung in broken disorder, the remnants of leaves were shrivelled and black. But the creamy blossoms had burst out after the gale had passed. They stood erect and fresh and luminous on the blasted discoloured branches, giving a strange impression of unassailable serenity. They made me think of altar candles burning in a shell-shattered church.

Behind the chestnut-tree blackthorns grew thickly among scattered rocks half-hidden by tall ferns. Michael Dinneen was sitting on a low rock where the thorn-trees meeting overhead formed a kind of leafy cavern. I saw that he was very thin. The light filtering through the leaves intensified the pallor of his face. His left sleeve was pinned to his coat pocket. At first sight he appeared a shattered man.

When he looked up, however, his expression showed no distress. His eyes were smiling and almost gay. It was evident that the cheerful imperturbable spirit which endured the horrors of war had not been broken by the turmoil of peace.

"'Tis the hairo that I'm after telling ye about, ma'am," said Cronin, thrusting forward. "Look at him, the brave fellow! He always was a strong boy and a healthy boy, and now, glory be to God! his constitootion is completely broken down!"

Having effected this introduction, he withdrew through the thorn bushes. He had already shown considerable courage and independence in befriending the boycotted ex-soldier. There was no immediate need for him to incur further risk.

A similar thought must have come to Dinneen, for he commented on the old man's kindness, adding, "They'll hardly touch him though, ma'am. The republicans don't care about the old men. It's the young lot they want to draw

in. If Bat Cronin's sons were living it would be different."

"I suppose Teige O'Leary would try to make Sinn Feiners of them, and shoot the whole family if they held out," I suggested.

"Ah, not at all," replied Dinneen. "Teige is a good decent fellow, sound through and through. A sincere patriot if ever there was one."

I heard this with surprise, for the scene at the murdered policeman's funeral recurred vividly to me. Then I remembered the piper's music and its soaring idealism, which accompanied so incongruously a hideous and revolting act.

Dinneen went on: "I'm not saying that what he *does* is right; it's his spirit I admire. He's sincere and straight himself, and wouldn't force any one to go agin their conscience. He's not agin the Government because it's English, but because he believes it has no right to govern Ireland. If you'd be arguing, he'd say, 'Well, and what about conscription? If the English were our rightful rulers they'd surely have *forced* us to join their army.' And many think the same. Sure, if a government has no faith in itself, it can't blame any one for doubting or disobeying it."

This indeed was undeniable. For through unjust inaction in Ireland the Government has denied its just assertions.

"I'm sorry for Teige, ma'am," continued Dinneen. "He had bad luck. I knew him when we were training near Carrigarinka in '15. He used to be hanging about watching the drilling wistful-like, wanting to join up and fight the Germans, and tormented in his mind because the other side was telling him he'd be a traitor to Ireland if he did. There were thousands like him in the country, though I'm not saying all of them were as keen as he to do the right sportsmanlike thing. But they'd have given the eyes out of their heads to fight on one side or the other. They were only waiting for a definite lead. And England just stepped back and let them go Sinn Fein."

While he spoke I watched him, wondering at his unembittered generosity. Traces of recent ill-treatment showed plainly on his face. The mere fact of his presence in the glen—a man crippled in his country's service, driven to obtain food by stealth—was, I felt, disgraceful evidence of Sinn Fein's inhuman cowardly methods. It was also a terrible indictment against the Government that such things should be possible.

I determined to spare no effort to ensure comfort and just treatment for Dinneen.

As I walked homewards I caught sight of a man slipping through the bushes at the entrance of the glen.

It was Teige O'Leary.

V.

I lay awake late that night thinking out plans for Dinneen's welfare.

It was by no means easy to see my way, for there was nobody I could ask to help me. Neighbours of my own class were few and far between, and every one already found it hard enough to "carry on" amid the ever-increasing difficulties that only Southern loyalists know.

The Carrigarinka villagers must on no account be involved in my schemes lest the boycott should be extended to them, in which case Dinneen's life might become unendurable. Nor was any form of public support at the moment available. In the nearest town the pensions offices, together with other Government buildings, had recently been burned down. Weeks must elapse before they would be sufficiently re-established to give any practical help. The police, our usual protectors, were themselves boycotted, and isolated behind the sandbags and steel shutters of their barracks. Moreover, within the last fortnight the District Inspector, a sergeant, and three constables had been shot dead, and the duties of the R.I.C. were now carried out by the military.

And I hesitated to bring the matter to the soldiers' notice, for it was well known that in order to avoid injuring Sinn Fein susceptibilities their every action was delayed and hampered by official red tape. They were themselves victims to a policy of "conciliation," and any application for help would probably be referred from one authority to another before definite results could be obtained. Meanwhile Dinneen might starve.

There remained old Bat Cronin, who doubtless would aid and abet me to the best of his ability, though it was only too likely he would be detected and punished. Indeed, he might already be under suspicion, for surely no mere chance had brought Teige O'Leary to the glen at the very hour that Dinneen received his daily supplies. Though I believed the young Sinn Feiner had not actually seen me on that occasion, I felt uneasily that he was out to obtain evidence against Cronin, and had perhaps intended to intercept him.

Think how I would, the matter resolved itself into a contest between three loyalists and one rebel. But the rebel had the whole unscrupulous power of Sinn Fein behind him.

It was at this point that an unreasonable and extraordinary idea suggested itself, which at first I smothered as being too outrageous for sober consideration. Impatient with myself I switched off the light and tried to go to sleep.

. . . . . .

However, the idea persisted. By daylight it seemed less preposterous, though hardly more justifiable.

I sat on the bank in the garden watching Bat Cronin, who, having reduced the peas to order, was now paying attention to the grass under the laburnums.

Every swing of the scythe in his lean old hands seemed to mow down a smooth half-circle, but the next instant the stronger tufts of grass would spring up again, bent but unsevered by the rusty blade. Just so, I reflected, when one stroke of reason swept my plan aside, a few strong points in its favour arose irrepressibly.

Mere reason is sometimes a blunt and unsatisfactory tool.

Cronin, scenting an opportunity for conversation, approached.

I asked a few casual questions concerning Teige O'Leary.

Cronin shot me a keen glance before inquiring—

"And why would your ladyship's honour be bothering yourself about that thrash?"

Without waiting for a reply, he went on, "He's something about the one age with me youngest boy—him that went out beyond France to Gallopoli, and was blown to bits by the haythen, glory be to God! Them Learys is a quare lot entirely, and as wild as the wind. Indeed, some people did be saying that Teige's grandfather was in league with the fairies, and 'twas themselves taught him the music he'd be playing. He'd play for the boys and girls in the evenings at the little rock of the dancing, and sometimes maybe there'd be others dancing there too, unbeknownst. Anny time the old fella'd play his fiddle or his pipes ye'd hear more music than himself 'ud be making. There'd be whistling and singing, very soft and quiet, and piping. And if ye'd hear the piping before dawn 'tis dead some one'd be, and the saints themselves couldn't prevint it."

"What about Teige?" I interposed, trying to keep the old man to the point; but he pursued his own line of thought without deviation.

"Teige himself is mad on the music. Sure he'd play tunes going to his death! He always had a great wish for the fairies—the on-natural fella! I heard tell he seen a witch once, and she riding upon a say-gull. She threwn herself off the say-gull on top of the potatoes. 'Tis to blight yees I've come,' says she to them, 'the English Governmint have it settled with me, and ye'll not get to grow at all,' and with that she drew the fog down on them as thick as the smoke of hell."

Inwardly I laughed at this fresh instance of English injustice to Ireland. Aloud I said—

"It would have been better if Teige had joined up for the war instead of studying the fairies."

"Well now, ma'am, that's

thrue," said Cronin; "and, bedad, he had a right to lose his life when others as good—yes, and better—was being killed continually." He paused, removing his hat. I knew he was thinking of his own sons. After a moment's silence he said, "Let me tell ye now, 'tis me belief he'd have joined up in the latther end only for the Black Pig."

His voice was suitably impressive as he mentioned the dreaded phantom said to have appeared in Ireland during the war.

"'Twas the Black Pig drove many a man to go Sinn Fein. Teige O'Leary seen it in the wesht, and the setting sun red like blood behind it. And the Sinn Fein leaders told him there was a curse coming to Ireland, and that the boys would have to be striving to drive it away. The thought preyed on him till he joined the Sinn Fein army to save Ireland from the curse."

As the old man rambled on, I realised for the hundredth time the difficulties the English have to contend with in dealing with a nation swayed equally by sedition and superstition.

The gleanings of this conversation, added to what Dinneen had said, gave me some understanding of Teige O'Leary's character. His seemed one of those cases, common enough in Ireland, where a man by nature a visionary and idealist, but like most uneducated Irishmen inflammable and unbalanced, falls an easy prey to seditious doctrines.

Clearly he was not yet one of the extremists, though his very sincerity might in time lead him far on the road to fanaticism. Taking all into consideration, there seemed just a chance, albeit a small one, that, if properly approached, he might prove not altogether unamenable. For my project was to appeal to him on behalf of Mike Dinneen, and persuade him to get the boycott revoked.

Although asking any favour from a rebel was intensely repugnant to me, I reminded myself that, as the rightful authorities could neither help nor protect, it was necessary to make the best I could of a bad business. Besides, anything was better than allowing an ex-soldier to starve.

Even if I did not succeed in getting the boycott removed, it was still possible that Teige might refrain from interfering with my efforts to provide food for Dinneen.

Beyond this I would not look for the present.

VI.

Contrary to my expectations, no immediate attempt was made to molest me. I received no threatening letter; the tradesmen's carts continued to call as usual.

The respite gave me time to lay in extra stores in view of a possible boycott. It also enabled me to send by registered post a report of Dinneen's case to the Pensions head office in Dublin, and another (mentioning no names) to an influential friend in England. But in present-day Ireland the payment of registration fees does not ensure safety for one's correspondence.

Of these two letters, the first presumably fell into the hands of raiders, for no reply ever reached me. The second, torn and dirtied to an incredible degree, returned within a week. Across the envelope was stamped "Opened by I.R.A." Inside I found scrawled across the margin of the letter, "*Not* passed by Cencer. You are very busy about the state of Ireland. Don't worry. When the english enemy and they that backs them is cleared out or dead it will be all right. Beware of the venjance of the Republic. Sinn Fein aboo.
(Signed) Comp. Mil. Authority,
I.R.A."

On reading this I knew that at any moment I might be obliged to seek special protection, and that, as the probable outcome of such a step, existence in Ireland, not only for myself but for Mike Dinneen and even for old Bat Cronin, would become impossible.

Clearly the best chance lay in pocketing my pride and coming to terms with Teige O'Leary as soon as possible.

There arose the question of how I should contrive to meet him. Though he was supposed to work on his uncle's small farm just under the little rock of the dancing, I knew he was seldom there, for I had only seen him a couple of times during the last two years. Nor, indeed, was it likely that his party would allow a man of his zeal and abilities to remain long at agricultural work.

Nevertheless I took the first opportunity of crossing the fields and strolling round the O'Learys' cottage in its sheltered nook. The door was closed, and the windows as well. Only a thin wisp of smoke rising from the chimney showed it actually was inhabited.

I was turning away when I noticed a large brown mark on the surface of the field just below the rock. Closer inspection revealed an oblong patch worn bare by the tramping of many feet. Here and there a footprint stood out clearly with the symmetrical outline of a well-made boot. There were indications, too, of rubber studs. It was not the footprint of the average countryman.

Something old Cronin had said rushed to my mind—"In the latther days 'tis there the boys'd be drilling."

Just then a motor lorry filled with soldiers rattled past the cross-roads. Over the fence-top I had a glimpse of trench helmets and of the muzzles of many rifles. I

became aware that the cottage door had opened. Teige's old uncle, with a vexed yet eager expression, was watching the disappearing patrol.

His reply to my greeting was ungracious in the extreme, and when I asked after his nephew, he seemed on the point of shutting the door in my face. Relenting somewhat, he said in a gruff voice, "How'd I know where Teige'd be? Hadn't he a right to be going cutting the hay for me?"

"You have a good crop of hay," I remarked; but heedless of my presence, he was surveying the rock with twitching uneasy eyes.

"Plotting and skaming," he muttered, "bringing throuble to the decent people. Them young lads have me moidered and torminted."

Then he addressed himself to me with sour vehemence: "Them military pathrols is no good thravelling the roads as regular and noisy as the mail thrain."

His last words before closing the door evidently referred to his nephew. There was an earnest and prayerful ring about them: "Please God, the police have him took!"

I was sorry for old O'Leary. Like many another, he obviously disapproved of Sinn Fein, yet was obliged to shelter one of its most ardent followers. That the rock had witnessed many strange doings I felt certain. Not only did it command the whole countryside, but it formed a natural barrier between the cross-roads and the fields. In fact, it seemed designed by nature for the use of Sinn Fein.

I hurried home through the hayfield, whose sweet-scented crop was laid flat in places by the recent rain. There was no sign of Teige. I could not delay, however, for it was nearly time to take the provisions to Dinneen.

An hour later, with the basket packed extra full in view of possible contingencies, I made my way slowly down the glen. A few paces from the horse-chestnut tree I stopped, arrested by a weird little melody that rang out suddenly over the songs of the birds. It came quivering through the blackthorns, gaining in resonance as it crossed the pool. The cliff at the entrance to the glen threw back the echo.

What gripped me was the indescribable sadness of the tune. Even in that quiet sunlit glen, radiant with the beauty of early summer, it brought a sense of deepest gloom.

There was a kind of hopeless finality about it, a foreboding of bitter and inevitable tragedy.

When the music ceased, the sense of gloom and oppression remained. I believe I did not move at first. Then I saw that the blackthorn branches had parted, and that Teige O'Leary stood before me.

Touching his cap, he said diffidently—

"Will I carry the basket to Dinneen for ye, ma'am?"

VII.

There is no doubt that in this land of contradictions one is seldom completely astonished. The man who fires at you from behind a hedge may, if he misses you, grasp your hand in cordial friendship to-morrow. And the man who prayerfully wishes you prosperity and long life may be plotting the destruction of your property and your death.

Anything may happen in Ireland, and so the element of surprise is practically eliminated.

I thanked Teige for his offer, feeling by no means taken aback by this unexpected development in the situation.

It was only when he passed the usual rendezvous, and, with his bagpipes under his arm and the basket on his shoulder, led the way up the farther side of the glen, that I asked him where he was going.

He explained that Dinneen was ill, and "keeping the bed with a shivering fit on him and a wakness he cot in the thrinches."

From the description, I diagnosed the illness as a touch of malaria.

How the young Sinn Feiner had come to befriend Dinneen was beyond my powers of conjecture; but though consumed by curiosity I did not try to find out. It seemed more discreet to accept everything as a matter of course. Future events might bring enlightenment.

I seized the opportunity, however, of extolling Dinneen with no uncertain voice. His patriotism, his courage, and his misfortunes were all set forth for the rebel's edification, as though I took it for granted he would share my opinion.

And my discourse was punctuated at intervals by a warmly spoken, "Indeed, ma'am, that's thrue."

Then, forgetting for the moment his recent experiences, I said, "It's terribly painful to starve."

Teige replied, quite unembarrassed—

"And that's thrue too, ma'am! Sure I learned it when I went on the hungry-strike in prison."

And his deep fanatical eyes, set in a face still thin and haggard from his self-imposed fast, held an expression of complete sincerity.

Not indeed till we emerged from the glen did his manner cease to be perfectly natural. Once we reached the fields a sudden self-consciousness descended upon him. He hesitated, glancing furtively about. I guessed that in the open my presence was no longer desirable, and perhaps was scarcely safe. So I wished him good evening and turned homewards.

Alone, I was consumed by doubts and suspicions. What was the explanation of it all? By what strange means had Teige renewed his friendship

with the man whom, if report said true, he had been among the first to ill-treat? Were his motives genuinely compassionate, or was he merely collecting additional evidence to lay before Sinn Fein?

If his profession of admiration for Dinneen were sincere, why did he not obtain a revocation of the boycott instead of merely helping in the surreptitious conveying of food?

I put this question to Dinneen when, having recovered from his attack of malaria, he met me as usual in the glen. He replied—

"It's not he that got me boycotted at all. He'd not have done it of himself any more than he'd have cut off Bridgie Moylan's hair. There's others over him that order these things. Why, it's a risk for him to have carried the basket to me the two times he did. There's some, ma'am, that are death on soldiers."

"The man with the Yankee accent, for instance?" I suggested.

Dinneen nodded.

"Who is he, Dinneen?"

"Teige himself could hardly tell that. But it's known that he was brought up foreign, and that he's a boss in the republican army. In the village they call him Con—the hound—for he'd track down any one or anything. He's a dangerous unscrupulous man, ma'am! Teige is out to make Ireland a little bit of heaven. Con's business is to see we don't escape hell." Dinneen concluded with a grim laugh.

And from all accounts Teige and Con were indeed representatives of two sections of Sinn Fein—the one striving after an unpractical and impracticable ideal, the other bent upon revolution and anarchy.

And it was evident that the latter was fast gaining in power.

VIII.

During the following days my suspicions dwindled considerably, and were replaced by something resembling compassion for the young rebel. I realised regretfully that his sincerity and misdirected zeal would certainly end in tragedy. For either he would blindly obey those who impelled him towards violence and crime, or some sudden enlightenment would result in a devastating disillusionment.

Meanwhile he seemed to have but few friends in Carrigarinka. His half-cracked old uncle openly anathematised him. The other farmers and villagers, though outwardly civil, feared and avoided him as a possible spy.

Although undeniably a rising light in the Sinn Fein firmament, his brightness was not appreciated in his own neighbourhood: and I have no doubt that the sensitiveness which accompanies an inflammable and idealistic tempera-

ment caused him to feel, even though he did not comprehend, the aloofness of his position.

One Sunday morning while the villagers were at Mass, about a dozen young men—mostly shop-assistants and clerks from the nearest town—assembled with a mixed pack of greyhounds and harriers in the furzy field above my avenue.

Teige was amongst them. I recognised his tall lanky figure. Later, I met him face to face after the meeting had dispersed. (For clearly it was a meeting rather than a meet—sedition and conspiracy masquerading as simple sport.)

He touched his cap gravely as he passed me. I was struck by the strangeness of his expression. It was harassed and perturbed to a remarkable degree. There was even a suggestion of dazed uncertainty in his movements. He looked like a man who had lost his way in a fog.

The following evening, to my surprise, I found him with Dinneen in the glen. The voice of the latter, raised in argument, was audible as I approached the chestnut-tree. Dinneen seemed roused for once from his easy-going cheerfulness. And Teige stood with his shoulders hunched and his head thrust forward, gazing moodily into space.

Between them, on the ground, the local newspaper, a rebel publication, proclaimed in staring headlines—

"TWO MORE
FINE REPUBLICAN VICTORIES."

Needless to ask for particulars of the "victories." A bomb flung from a railway bridge into a lorry crowded with soldiers; a police patrol shot down from the safe shelter of a loopholed wall,—the Irish newspapers daily record similar outrages; the English, with few exceptions, ignore them, or merely condemn the retribution which sometimes overtakes their perpetrators.

"I tell you it's a disgrace," Dinneen was saying. "It's not victory—it's low-down devilish murder. It is,"—he hesitated, searching his brain for some super-stinging condemnation,—"it is a dirty, cowardly, Hunnish game."

He told me afterwards he had to speak his mind, even if he died for it next minute. And he knew Teige carried a revolver.

I could not hold my tongue either. I echoed Dinneen's horror.

Teige said sullenly—

"The republic declared war upon England. The soldiers and police is the enemy."

"If you call it war, why don't you fight fair," I cried. "Why do you take England's money and let the English navy protect your shores? You call it war, but you only attack when there is no danger to yourselves. It is not war, but treachery—treachery and cowardice, and Ireland is disgraced for ever by it."

Of course it was foolish and imprudent to speak thus, but I did not stop to consider.

Teige's face flushed. His

right hand slipped swiftly inside his coat. The gesture is a familiar one to Irish loyalists. Some, indeed, do not live beyond its usual sequel. I wondered if he was really going to shoot me. But the next moment he withdrew his hand and it was empty.

With his chin sunk below his collar he turned abruptly and walked away.

IX.

"I'm very onaisy in meself, ma'am," said Bat Cronin, shaking his head dejectedly.

I was driving along the bog-road to the railway junction, accompanied by the old man, who would "care the pony and trap" until my return in the afternoon.

Owing to the recent scene in the glen, I realised it was imperative to seek help for Dinneen without delay, and I intended personally to visit all the organisations for helping ex-soldiers, and even, if need be, lay his case before the general commanding the district. After my previous experience I would not again depend upon writing, and, indeed, the posts were becoming more and more unreliable.

"There was men in the rath ere last night," continued Cronin; "I crep up behind the trees and heard a fella reading as fast as a horse 'ud gallop. Sure 'twas the dead spit of a priest saying mass—divil a word that a Christian could understand! He clapped a big sheet of paper on the ground, and I seen the lot of them looking it hither and over by dint of a bicycle lanthern, and one of them to be making thracks on it with an ashplant. Is it what were they doing? Ah, faith then, how'd I be saying that unless I'd tell ye a lie? I declare to ye, ma'am, on account of the rustling of leaves that was in it, and meself getting the old age pinsion these two years, all I heard good or bad was the way some one of them'd say, 'Tis a grand clear night,' says he; 'twould be aisy to see the road over-right the rock and be settling our plans,' says he, and away with them then towards the little rock of the dancing."

I expressed surprise that the Sinn Feiners should hold their meeting in the rath instead of below the rock.

Cronin explained:—

"'Tis on account of the military changing the pathrol they have. Sure the lorry does be passing the little rock of the dancing an hour after sunset. 'Tis safer for the boys to be talking in the rath. Arrah! tell me now," he added impatiently, "what sinse have the soldiers at all? 'Tis desthroying themselves they are with their punctualness."

Not for the first time was I struck by the risk entailed by a system of patrols at fixed hours in a country where the

prudent observe two golden rules: Never do anything at stated hours; never go and return by the same road.

A cloud stole up the sky, changing the colour of the bog from warm copper to tones of madder-brown deepening to violet. The bog-cotton, with its unceasing shiver, looked like a flight of phantom grey butterflies. The latent melancholy, which in Ireland pervades even a summer landscape, made itself felt insistently.

When Cronin spoke again he gave words to my own undefined thought—

"I'm in dread there'll be bad work out of it."

. . . . . .

At the junction Fate once more was against me. Two minutes before the train was due to start a party of soldiers commanded by a N.C.O. entered a third-class carriage, whereupon the driver and stoker descended with dignity from the engine.

The soldiers remained in their seats. I was glad. Anything is better than vacillation or yielding.

But the train remained in the station.

X.

It was in an irritated and anxious frame of mind that I carried the basket to the glen in the evening.

I had told Dinneen I should be later than usual, and the shadows were already growing long when I reached the pool, which shone with opal tints amid its fringe of reeds. The ground was strewn with fallen horse-chestnut blossoms scarcely withered as yet, and diffusing a warm incense-like sweetness.

I pushed my way through the blackthorns to the leafy green cavern. Dinneen was not there. I put the basket on the ground and sat down to wait for him.

A willow-wren, darting from the blackthorn on my left, drew my attention to something white and uneven against the dark stem. Impaled upon a sharply broken branch was a piece of bread. I pulled it off. It was just a rough lump with a partly-cut slice at one end. As I held it a sudden thought—half instinct, half memory—came to me. During the early days of the war, when working with an ambulance in Flanders, I had heard tales of messages conveyed by strange means from men hidden in Belgian farms.

Carefully I turned back the half-cut slice, and found it concealed a hollow scooped from the heart of the loaf. Some paper rolled into a ball was visible. I drew it out, unfolded it, and read—

"A chara,

"'Tis best not to travel the road near the little rock of the dancing. Let ye tell them that's in your trade. The boys will be gathered in the field

below the rock to-morrow night at 9.30 (God's time) to be playing ball. *The ball may burst.*

"*P.S.*—'Tis the way the two of us was patriots, but 'tis yourself was the best. God save Ireland."

I turned the smeared and crumpled paper over and round. There was no signature, nor anything to indicate for whom it was intended. I was still examining it when Dinneen appeared. He read it attentively a couple of times.

I could see he was puzzled.

"'*The ball may burst*,'" he repeated thoughtfully. Then his face changed.

"My God!" he exclaimed.

"What can it mean?" I speculated. "Is it intended for you? And 'them that's in your trade,' Dinneen? Are they soldiers?"

"They are, ma'am," he replied, "and it's fixed for to-morrow night. No, hold on, hold on! it's for *to-night!* Look, ma'am, the loaf is sodden with rain, and not a drop fell since yesterday evening. This message must have been here twenty-four hours. The Sinn Feiners intend to bomb the patrol when it passes the little rock of the dancing to-night."

"Can it be true?" I asked, though I knew it was only too likely. "And if so, who sent the warning?"

"Teige sent it," said Dinneen in a whisper, "and if *they* knew he'd pay for it with his life."

We were silent for a few minutes. Clearly the soldiers must be warned. Yet how at this hour convey a message to the camp?

To telephone it would be unsafe. There was nobody I could send. Moreover, if the warning were genuine, the roads would certainly be watched by republican scouts, and there would be little chance of getting through to the camp.

Dinneen solved the problem by announcing he would go himself. He would strike across country, avoiding the road, and take cover should he catch sight of any suspicious-looking person. "Even if I don't get to the camp I'll manage somehow to intercept the lorry," he said.

At his suggestion I scribbled on a page torn from my note-book a few lines of explanation and recommendation to the officer in command at the camp.

Then I looked at my watch. It was nearly ten o'clock.

"The ball is to be set rolling soon after eleven," said Dinneen. "I must hurry. Thank God, though one arm is gone I still have two sound legs under me."

There was indeed no time to spare, though "God's time," which patriots still observe in that neighbourhood, is an hour and forty minutes behind summer-time.

Dinneen replaced the note in its hole in the rain-soaked loaf, and thrust the lump into an inner pocket.

He laughingly referred to it as "despatches," and spoke with confidence of "getting through the enemy's lines."

I felt less hopeful.

XI.

A restlessness due to suspense and enforced inaction drove me out of the house again soon after sunset.

Passing through the grove of fir-trees outside the library window, I took a short cut to the fields on the hill.

The sky was a vivid saffron melting to indigo through gold and primrose tints. Against the brilliance the telephone poles stood abrupt and uncompromising.

Their very ugliness went some way towards restoring my confidence. They seemed to stand for law and order; they constituted, as it were, a link with civilisation.

Farther on, just below one pole, a goat struggled frantically. With every movement something hit the pole, making a metallic rattle. One glance at the unbridged space between that pole and the next revealed the fact that my link with civilisation had been severed.

It also proved, indirectly, that Teige's warning was genuine.

After some little time spent in freeing the goat's leg from the wire in which it was caught, I went on up the hill. Once I fancied I heard stealthy footsteps following. I did not look round, however, but walked on somewhat faster, keeping in the shadow of the fence.

Daylight had gone—a flat grey-blue tint was over everything. Even on moonless nights there is no real darkness at midsummer. Across the northern horizon lay a faint primrose line, which during the next few hours would gradually deepen and spread to the east. Around me drifts of daisies showing palely in the meadows, and dim white blossoms scattered through the hedges, shone like veiled lights in the fragrant dusk. It was a night far removed from all suggestions of murder and sudden death. Yet scarcely a mile away the little rock of the dancing stood threateningly above the cross-roads.

And the patrol might pass at any moment now.

When the road was less than a field ahead, I was startled by again hearing footsteps behind me. This time they broke into a run.

No cover was available except a straggling thicket of alders into which I thrust myself, and crouched, holding my breath. The runner stopped just outside.

"Ma'am, ma'am!" came a panting whisper. "I'm thracking ye half the night. For God's sake let ye go aisy and not cross the road! Bedad, ye'll not get to go home ayther without losing your life, for they have the house watched on ye!"

I recognised old Bat Cronin. He groped towards me in the thicket.

"Is it yourself that's inside

within there at all?" he grumbled. "Ah, tell me now, for the love of God, what'd a lady like ye be doing in the fields at the dead of night these quare times, when maybe any one would be killed next minute?"

"There's murdher abroad, ma'am," he announced, when I had followed his whispered instructions and established myself in an old disused graveyard overlooking the road. "Murdher and vingeance."

"I'm thinking Teige O'Leary is after going back on them," he continued mysteriously; "a while ago meself was passing the cross-roads at the little rock of the dancing, and I seen him go into his house and he with a look of thunder on his face. 'Tis said in the village that he's after falling out with 'Con' the hound, and God help him so, for 'twill be a matther of death and no throuble at all about. I hadn't barely turned wesht from the rock when a motor-car come roaring up the hill, and I concealed meself in a ditch overright the pig-sty, and seen three men from the car knock at the cottage door. 'Twas Teige himself opened it, and he dazzled-like by the sunset.

"'Come on,' says one of the strangers.

"'Where'll I go?' says Teige.

"The stranger threwn him an ugly look. 'Ye'll go where the republic'll send ye,' says he. 'And maybe 'twill be to hell,' says he, and with that the three of them laughed, and one of them to be saying Teige should take his pipes to hell with him. In the latther end the lot of them made off in the motor-car, and Teige sitting between them with the pipes and not to be speaking."

Cronin would hazard no opinion as to where they went. He merely shook his head, and launched into a rambling description of his discovery that Sinn Fein scouts were watching my house. They must have reached the front door just when I was slipping out of the library window, for Cronin from some vantage-point had seen me emerging from the fir wood a few minutes later.

"There's something up, ma'am," he kept repeating.

I felt his keen old eyes trying to read my face in the dark. But, of course, I remained silent.

Meanwhile there was no sound of a motor lorry. Nothing and nobody passed along the road. A great stillness settled over the country, broken at intervals by the old man's voice murmuring reminiscences, conjectures, and eventually prayers. For no Irish peasant is at ease in the proximity of graves by night, and only a most potent fear of the living could have induced him to take refuge among the dead.

The strange night wore on without incident. The presumption that Dinneen had been successful brought a feeling of immense relief. Gradually growing sleepy, I watched

the winding white road, where overhanging trees made dark blots of shadow like the deeper pools in a stream. I imagined myself sitting by a peaceful glimmering river, far from all danger and unrest.

The hoarse cry of a heron sailing overhead completed the illusion of calm moonlit water.

. . . . . .

The primrose line in the sky had brightened and spread to the north-east, when I found myself suddenly wide awake and very cold.

Over the graveyard trees a long shiver was passing; the grass on the mounds rustled faintly.

A barely perceptible shrillness came from the bog-lands below Carrigarinka.

It was scarcely even a vibration—just a vague thread of silver drifting before the dawn wind, and striking the senses where sight and hearing are indistinguishable.

I glanced down the hill towards the bog which lay invisible beneath a shroud of grey mist.

As I looked, the vague silver thread seemed to penetrate the mist, and emerge transformed into a definite sound.

Bat Cronin grasped my arm.

"Listen, ma'am, listen!" he whispered. "Whisht! whisht! 'tis the fairies! 'Tis the pipers playing before dawn. Oh, God and the Blessed Saints save us all! Sure there'll be some one dead before morning."

His quick-drawn breath and trembling hand revealed an intensity of agitation.

The sound shaped itself into a melody, clear though remote, and mournful past the verge of despair. It rose in a minor wail, hovered, and fell. Its closing cadence held a hint of irrevocable doom.

Then almost immediately a different strain broke out, vivid and triumphant, like gay colours at sunrise.

Once again came the vision of a dauntless unearthly leader. But this time he was advancing alone.

A volley of rifle-shots, distant, yet sharp and decisive, brought the music to an end.

XII.

When the sun rose I walked back into the house through the library window, which was still open as I had left it.

I half expected to find signs of a raid, but all was quiet and in order. Evidently the watchers' presence had been due to a not unfounded suspicion that I might have learned of the design upon the patrol, and in consequence might take steps to frustrate it.

News spreads with an amazing swiftness in rural Ireland. By the time I had finished breakfast my entire staff was in possession of the fact that Teige O'Leary had been shot

mysteriously at the far side of the bog.

"There was a handkerchief acrost his eyes, and his legs was wropt round with sugauns," said the cook, an elderly and estimable woman who took a complacent interest in every tragic event. "The bagpipes was in the mud beside him, and his fingers bent as if he'd still be playing, God forgive him! when 'twas saying his prayers he had a right to be, the creature! There was a shlip of paper pinned to his coat, and it saying in big writing, 'The vingeance of the republic. Thraitors and Informers Beware!' Ah, wisha then! such goings on! 'Tis the quare times we're having! Is it the chicken or the beef ye'll be ating to-day, ma'am?"

. . . . . .

Towards noon Cronin brought word that Dinneen's cottage was closed and empty, and "divil a one in the village to give an account of him, good or bad; and, faith, some had it 'twas he got Teige O'Leary shot, and that maybe he'd be on the run now himself."

This illogical surmise amused me, but I kept my own counsel, feeling satisfied that, for the present at any rate, Mike Dinneen was safe and amongst friends.

A little later I was in the drawing-room interviewing a young officer who had come over from the camp in an armoured car.

The page torn from my notebook which I had given Dinneen the previous evening was in my hand. Mechanically I re-read the hastily improvised recommendation.

"*The bearer, Michael Dinneen, late Corporal —th Regiment, is well known to me——*"

"Most regrettable," the young officer was saying. He seemed distressed and nervous. "The patrol set out as usual last night. Some three miles from camp the lorry broke down. While repairs were being carried out a man was observed looking over the fence about thirty yards away. He climbed into the road and moved through the shadows towards the lorry. The soldier on sentry duty challenged him. The man held up one hand, keeping the other suspiciously in his pocket. The sentry fired. The man fell, shot through the heart. Then we discovered why he had not put up both hands. He had only one arm."

RAISULI.

BY WALTER B. HARRIS.

I.

MULAI AHMED BEN MOHAMMED ER-RAISULI is to-day a man of about fifty years of age. He is by birth sprung from one of the most aristocratic families in Morocco, and is a Shereef, or direct descendant of the Prophet, through Mulai Idris, who founded the Mohammedan Empire of Morocco, and was the first sovereign of the Idrisite Dynasty. The children of Mulai Idris were established in various parts of the country, and it is from Mulai Abd-es-Salam, whose tomb in the Beni Aros tribe is a place of great sanctity, that the famous brigand is directly descended — his family, and he himself, still holding a share in the lands, the rights, and the privileges which were enjoyed by their renowned ancestor. A branch of the family settled in Tetuan, where a fine mosque forms a mausoleum for his more recent ancestors, and is venerated as a place of pilgrimage.

Possibly it was this holy ancestry that turned Raisuli from the paths of virtue, for after having received an excellent education in religion and religious law at Tetuan he took to the adventurous, lucrative, and in Morocco by no means despised, profession of a cattle robber. It is a risky business and requires courage. You may just as likely be shot yourself as shoot any one else; but prestige tells in favour of the head of the band, and a reign of terror of the young Raisuli ensued. He became celebrated. He was a youth of great courage, of the most prepossessing looks, and he and his followers earned money easily and fast—and spent it still faster. But cattle robberies led to other crimes. Murders followed, and it must be confessed that Raisuli's hands are none too clean in that respect; but murder in Morocco cannot be classed with murder in England. Life is cheap, and the dead are soon forgotten. By nature he was, and is, cruel, and the profession he had adopted gave him unlimited scope to exhibit his cruelty. On one occasion a Shereef who had married his sister proposed, according to Moslem custom, to take a second wife. Raisuli's sister, enraged, fled to her brother and complained. Nothing occurred till the night of the new marriage, when at the height of the festivities Raisuli and his men entered his brother-in-law's house and put to death the young bride and her mother.

At length his acts became insupportable. The whole country round lived in terror of his raids. The late Sultan ordered his arrest. His greatest friend betrayed him; he was seized and sent to prison in the dreaded dungeons of Mogador. When, in 1903, I was Raisuli's prisoner at Zinat, he narrated more than once to me the history of those four or five years spent in prison. He showed me the marks of the chains on his ankles, wrists, and neck; he told me of the filth and the cold; of the introduction of a file in a loaf of bread; of five months' patient work at night; and of a delayed flight. He escaped, but for a very few hours. He did not know his way about the town, and he had forgotten that the chains would almost prevent his walking. He entered a street that had no outlet and was recaptured. Fresh chains were heaped upon him, and it was not till two years later that he was released on the petition of Haj Mohammed Torres, the Sultan's representative at Tangier. He came back to his home, meaning to live a quiet and peaceful life, but he found that his friend who had betrayed him had become Governor of Tangier and confiscated all his property. He applied for its return, but could not obtain it. He threatened, but they laughed at him—and then he took to his old profession and became a brigand.

It was at this period that I first met him. I was camping on a shooting expedition near Arzeila when he and his men paid me a visit and spent the night at my camp. I confess that his personality was almost fascinating. Tall, remarkably handsome, with the whitest of skins, a short dark beard and moustache, and black eyes, with profile Greek rather than Semitic, and eyebrows that formed a straight line across his forehead, Mulai Ahmed er-Raisuli was a typical and ideal bandit. His manner was quiet, his voice soft and low, and his expression particularly sad. He smiled sometimes, but seldom; and even though I knew him much better later on, I never heard him laugh. With his followers he was cold and haughty, and they treated him with all the respect due to his birth.

When next I saw him I was his prisoner at his stronghold at Zinat, situated about twelve miles from Tangier—in June 1903. He had altered a little. His face had filled out, the mouth had become harder and a little more cruel, but he was still remarkably handsome. He had not changed for the better. Only a few months before my capture he had sold one of his prisoners to an enemy for $1500, and stood by to see the purchaser cut the victim's throat. As long as he had restricted his energies to cattle-lifting and to attacks upon natives no one paid very serious attention to him, though the Makhzen were trying to

encompass his capture. On 16th June 1903 the Shereefian troops attacked and burned Zinat; the same afternoon I was captured.

Hearing that a battle had taken place at that spot, situated some eight or nine miles away, I rode out toward the middle of the day in that direction, accompanied by my native groom, whose parents lived at Zinat, and who was most anxious as to the safety of his relations. Already the alarm had spread to the neighbouring villages, and we found the country round entirely deserted, the population having fled to the mountains of Anjera with all their cattle and as much of their goods as they could carry away. Although the attack of the Government troops had been made with the object of capturing Raisuli, the native cavalry had wandered far afield after loot, and a considerable number of cattle, &c., had been carried off from villages innocent of any rebellious intentions, and in no way accessories to Raisuli's depredations.

I found it difficult on this account to obtain any accurate information of what had occurred, and a desire to do so, coupled with my groom's anxiety, persuaded me to approach nearer than was perhaps advisable to the scene of the morning's action. Skirting the stony hill on which Zinat is situated, I entered the plain, crossed by small gullies, that lies to the south of the villages, and until within two miles of the place met with no incident worth recording. The whole country was absolutely deserted. Not a single person, not a head of cattle, was to be seen.

It was when we were crossing this plain that suddenly a volley was fired at us from men concealed in the brushwood and rocks of a small hill near by. The range was a long one, and though we could hear the bullets whizzing over our heads, I do not believe that any passed us very closely. Setting spurs to our horses, we cantered away out of range, and drew rein on an elevation in the plain in the midst of a field of corn. Turning to see what was happening, I perceived three or four natives a considerable distance away, who had taken off their cloaks and turbans and were waving to me to return. This waving of turbans is always in Morocco a sign of "aman" or safety, and I therefore waited for the men, who were moving quickly in our direction. Two alone approached us, both well known to me; and having arrived at the spot where we were stationed, they apologised profusely for the mistake of their men in having fired, and begged me to return with them to Zinat to discuss the situation there. They were Anjera men from the neighbouring Roman hills, who had not been present at the battle, but who had come down to Zinat, as the irregular cavalry had carried off a considerable number of

their cattle. They stated that they were desirous of knowing the intentions of the Moorish Government with regard to their tribe. If, they said, it was the Government's intention to attack them, they were ready to resist; but if the Moorish forces had been ordered merely to capture Raisuli and had looted their property without authority, they demanded the return of their cattle—a very reasonable demand. They added that they were afraid to proceed to Tangier to interview the authorities for fear of capture and imprisonment there, and asked me accordingly to take their message to the native officials, as on such occasions I had often done before. Under a promise of safety I proceeded with them in the direction of Zinat, having agreed that I should go to a spot near the hills where three or four of the headmen of the tribe were to meet me.

It was when proceeding in that direction that I was captured. We were crossing a small gully, thick with crimson-blossomed oleanders, when suddenly I discovered that I had fallen into an ambush. Flight was impossible, and as I was unarmed resistance was out of the question. From every side sprung out tribesmen, and in a second or two I was a prisoner surrounded by thirty or forty men, one and all armed with European rifles. I received no rough treatment at their hands, but was told that I was their prisoner and must proceed to Zinat. On arrival at the woods which surround the several villages which lie scattered on the Zinat hills, messengers were sent to inform Raisuli of my capture, and in a short time I was taken to him. He was seated under some olive-trees in a little gully, surrounded by his men and by the headmen of the neighbouring tribes, who had collected on learning what had taken place. Raisuli received me pleasantly enough. He was still a young man of handsome appearance, refined in feature and manner, and with a pleasant voice. He was dressed in the costume of the mountain tribes, a short brown cloak covering his white linen clothes and reaching only to the knees, with a turban of dark-blue cloth. His legs were bare, and he wore the usual yellow slippers of the country. After a short talk with Raisuli, who narrated to me all that had taken place, he led me to what remained of his house, the greater part of which had been burned by the troops. Up to this time I had nothing to complain of in the attitude of the tribesmen, but a great number had collected in the vicinity, all anxious to catch a glimpse of the Christian captive, and not a few inclined to wreak summary vengeance on me for the devastation the Government troops had committed in the place. There was a good deal of hooting and cursing, but Raisuli's influence was sufficient for him to be

able to hurry me through the crowd, now very threatening, and his own followers closed round me and guarded me from the mountaineers. It was an unpleasant moment, for I soon perceived that no authority existed over this collection of tribesmen, who numbered at this time perhaps 2000—though by nightfall this number was probably doubled—and that there would be no possibility of protection did they proceed to extremes. It was with no little relief that I saw a small door opened in the remaining portion of Raisuli's house, where I was pushed in. A moment later the door was closed again, but it seemed as though the crowd without would break it down. But Raisuli and his men, and a score of personal friends amongst the tribesmen, formed up against the doorway outside, and were able to dissuade the rabble from their intention of dragging me out.

The room in which I found myself was very dark, light being admitted only by one small window near the roof, and it was some time before my eyes became accustomed to the gloom. When I was able to see more clearly, the first object that attracted my eyes was a body lying in the middle of the room. It was the corpse of a man who had been killed there in the morning by the troops, and formed a ghastly spectacle. Stripped of all clothing and shockingly mutilated, the body lay with extended arms. The head had been roughly hacked off, and the floor all round was swimming in blood. The soldiers had carried off the head in triumph as a trophy of war, and they had wiped their gory fingers on the whitewashed walls, leaving blood-stains everywhere. However, I was not to suffer the company of the corpse for long, for half a dozen men came in, washed the body, sewed it up in its winding-sheet, and carried it away for burial, and a little later the floor was washed down, though no attempt was made to remove the bloody finger-marks from the wall.

Here I remained alone for some hours, and it was certainly an anxious time. I reviewed the situation quietly, and came to the conclusion that, in spite of the danger which I knew existed, I had much in my favour. The fact that the language of the people was almost the same to me as my own tongue was a great assistance, and amongst these mountain tribes I had a large number of personal friends, who, I believed, and rightly, would protect me as far as they were able. Unfortunately, few of my influential acquaintances amongst the mountaineers had arrived, though to my joy I learned, from the conversation of the guards outside the door, that they were expected during the coming night. I decided meanwhile to pretend absolute ignorance of any danger, and to

talk of my condition as only one of a series of adventures that I have undergone in Morocco and elsewhere.

At sundown Raisuli and some of his men brought me food, and I had a long conversation with them. Raisuli was polite, and made no secret that he intended to make use of me, though he had not yet decided in what way. He, however, kindly informed me that, should the attack of the troops be renewed, I should be immediately killed. His career, he said, was practically finished, and his sole desire was to cause the Moorish Government as much trouble and humiliation as possible, and he argued that there would be no easier way to do this than by causing my death. However, he promised me at the same time that, provided no fresh attack was made upon the place, he would do his best to protect me. I was allowed to communicate with the British Legation, but was not aware till later that this letter never reached its destination, though the following morning I was in direct communication with His Majesty's Minister, and throughout my captivity no difficulties were put in my way in corresponding with the British Legation.

During the night a large contingent of the Anjera tribe arrived, amongst them several influential men on whose friendship I felt I might implicitly rely; and, as a matter of fact, I owed my release, and probably my life, largely to these men.

There is no need to give the details of the nine days that I spent at Zinat. Sufficient to say that I suffered very considerable hardship. Though never actually roughly handled, except for a few insulting blows with slippers, &c., my discomforts were extreme. During those nine days I was never able to wash, I never took my clothes off, with the result that I was smothered with vermin. Once I went for thirty-six hours without any food, for none was procurable, as the village had been burnt, and during the whole time my life was threatened. My friends did what they could for me, but it was little they could do. There must have been some 4000 tribesmen present, and they obeyed no one, and no one had any authority over them. It was a trying time, but my only chance lay in pretending to place implicit confidence in them, and thus gain time while the negotiations for my release proceeded.

No words of praise are sufficient for the great discretion displayed by Sir Arthur Nicolson, the British Minister, in conducting these negotiations. From the very beginning he realised the difficulties of success, and throughout, in every dealing that he had with the tribesmen, he showed the greatest tact and skill. He from the commencement warned the Moorish Govern-

ment not to take any steps to treat with the mountaineers, and conducted the entire proceedings himself, Mulai Ahmed, the young Shereef of Wazzan, being the means of communication between the British Government and the tribesmen. These negotiations were doubly difficult owing to the fact that the mountaineers had no recognised chiefs, and that many tribes were concerned. Yet in such a manner were the negotiations conducted, that throughout the whole proceedings the ignorant and fanatical tribesmen placed entire confidence in the Minister's word, and though delays occurred, as they always do in Morocco, there was never a serious hitch.

The first demand made to me for my release was the removal of all Englishmen from the Sultan's Court. I naturally treated this as preposterous, and persuaded the tribesmen that it was mere folly to mention it. This was followed by other equally impossible conditions, which were likewise abandoned, and by the time that the British Legation was in communication with the tribesmen, they had lessened their demands to the release of a certain number of tribal prisoners confined in the prisons of Tangier and Laraiche.

At no time was a demand made for a ransom in money, and in this my capture differed entirely from those of Mr Perdicaris and Kaid Maclean, which took place later. I owed this immunity from a pecuniary ransom to an admirable trait in the character of these wild mountain tribesmen. My country-house at Tangier was situated about two and a half miles from the town, on the sea-coast, on the main track that passes between the Anjera tribe and Tangier. Just beyond my grounds, on the town side, is a tidal river, which then and now possesses no bridge, but is fordable at low tide. Often the tribespeople found the tide too high to cross and were obliged to wait long weary hours, in winter at times in darkness and rain. A large number were women and young girls carrying loads of charcoal to market. I had always made it a rule to give shelter to all such as asked for it, and had built a room or two for this purpose, and in winter-time it was seldom that some of the benighted peasants were not spending the night there. When it was cold and wet they had a fire, and as often as not a little supper. A very short time after my capture a proposal was made from Tangier that a very considerable sum of money should be paid for my immediate release. This was discussed by the tribesmen and refused. They decided that in the case of one who had shown such hospitality to their women and children, and often to themselves, there must be no question of money—and there was none.

There was one hitch which threatened to break down our

negotiations, and which caused some delay to my release.

It had been agreed that twelve prisoners from the tribesmen, confined in various Moorish Government prisons, were to be released in exchange for myself; but after a very numerously attended meeting, at which a number of fresh mountaineers arrived, a demand was made for the release of over fifty. The British Legation was notified of this, and very rightly objected to this sudden and very large addition. Sir Arthur Nicolson wrote me to this effect. Before, however, making known the contents of his letter, I obtained the names of all the fifty tribesmen whose release was demanded, and sent the list to Tangier, pretending that it was to be submitted to the authorities, in order that in the case of its acceptance orders for the release of the men might be given. Once this letter was well on its way, I made known to the tribesmen that on no account would more than the original twelve prisoners be released. At first they tried persuasion, and then threats; but I felt sure of my position. "You propose," I said, "to kill me. Possibly you will do so, but you have kindly given me a list of all your relations who are in the Moorish prisons—some fifty-six in all, I think. This list is now in Tangier. You will have the satisfaction of killing me; but remember this—on fifty-six consecutive days one of your sons or brothers or nephews will be executed—one each morning; and more—their bodies will be burnt and the ashes scattered to the wind. You will see the smoke from here"—for Tangier was visible from where we were. Now, the Moors believe in a corporeal resurrection, and the burning of a body means the depriving of the soul of resurrection. It was a splendid bluff, and I felt the greatest delight in using it. I was there alone, seated in the centre of a great circle of the tribesmen, who swore and cursed and threatened,—but to no avail. I even explained that it was a matter of no importance in the Christian religion what became of one's body, and pointed out the consequent loss of fifty-six good Moslem souls, deprived of going to heaven. I was successful. The tribesmen returned to their original demand.

In all my dealings with the Moors I have found this, that the intelligent European, provided he has a complete and absolute knowledge of the language, holds a very distinct advantage over the Moor. He has, in fact, two advantages—hereditary training of thought, and education. The Moor is generally, by his environment and isolation, a slow thinker, and in the many difficult situations in which I at times found myself, I always had confidence in my own mental superiority over the average native. I have been able to

turn threats into ridicule, or to raise a laugh, or to persuade by the mere superiority of the power of thinking and of giving utterance to one's thoughts. The Moor is very susceptible to sarcasm and ridicule, and often I have turned what looked like becoming a stormy incident into the pleasantest of channels. Knowing the mentality of the Moor and his language so well, I have trusted solely to this superiority,—except for sporting arms, and those only on shooting trips, I have, almost without exception, carried no arms, which are often more a source of danger than of security.

The only time that I left my quarters for more than a few minutes together was on one occasion, a few days after my arrival, when I was taken down to a gully below the village to be shown the corpse of a Moorish cavalry soldier who had been killed during the engagement. In revenge for the beheading of the Zinat man who had been killed, the tribesmen had mutilated the soldier's body. It was a ghastly sight. The summer heat had already caused the corpse to discolour and swell. An apple had been stuck in the man's mouth, and both his eyes had been gouged out. The naked body was shockingly mutilated, and the finger-tips had been cut off, to be worn, the tribesmen told me, as charms by their women. The hands were pegged to the ground by sticks driven through the palms, about a yard in length, bearing little flags. A wreath of wild flowers was twined round the miserable man's head, and the village dogs had already gnawed away a portion of the flesh of one of the legs. I was jokingly informed that that was probably what I should look like during the course of the next few days.

I had used every opportunity to bring the friendly tribe of Anjera over to my side, and on the night of the ninth day my friends rose nobly to the occasion. They surrounded Raisuli's house and village with perhaps a thousand men, all armed and prepared, and demanded that I should be handed over to them, threatening that, if this were not immediately carried out, they would shoot or arrest Raisuli. It was a little *coup d'état*, and it was successful. In the middle of the night I was hustled out of the small room which I shared with a dozen guards, placed on the back of a mule, and carried off into the Anjera mountains by my friends of that tribe. For six hours we proceeded through mountain passes and thick brushwood, arriving soon after sunrise at the village of Sheikh Duas, one of the most influential of the Anjera tribesmen. It was a journey; I will never forget it—the darkness of the moonless night, the rough mountain tracks, the silence of the hundreds of armed men who accompanied me, and the intense relief that,

even if my captivity was long protracted, I was amongst men who would, at any rate, protect my life. I was tired and weak. Nine days of constant strain, in great heat, on a diet of inferior dry bread and water, with the necessity the whole time of pretending rather to enjoy the situation than otherwise, had worn me out. But from the friendly tribe of Anjera I received nothing but kindness—every word, every act of theirs was cheering and thoughtful; and though life among them was rough enough in its way, I owe them a debt of gratitude that it will be difficult ever to repay. I remained twelve days at Sheikh Duas's village in the Anjera mountains, and throughout that period I never suffered an indignity or an insult from him or his people. A little room in his house was put at my disposal, and infinite pains were taken to render it clean and habitable. The best of such food as was procurable was given me—milk and cream-cheese, and a rough porridge of sour milk and millet. His followers—for Duas is not above being a cattle-robber on a large scale—helped me to pass my time pleasantly enough, and with them I explored the neighbouring mountains, and sat in the shade of the fruit trees of their little gardens listening to their local musicians or watching the ungraceful movements of their dancing girls. I made friends there whose friendship I shall always value. I was treated as one of the tribe. I wore their dress, shaved my head, and conformed to all their customs; but above and beyond all, my anxiety was at an end—I knew that I was out of grave danger.

Meanwhile the British Minister, ably assisted by the Shereef of Wazzan, was carrying on the negotiations. Although I was now amongst friends, these negotiations were delicate and difficult, for the Anjera tribe had given their word to the other tribes concerned not to release me until their prisoners were set free, and these other tribes were constantly desirous of changing their conditions, and, owing to the distances which separated them, this necessarily meant delay. The very fact that I was now some twenty-seven miles—a day's journey—from Tangier protracted the negotiations. Several times I seemed on the point of release, but some small hitch, unimportant, it is true, would arise and a delay occur.

Except for this the time passed pleasantly, the scenery was delightful, and although it was the middle of summer the air was cool at this altitude. Little streams of water ran in every direction, and I was able to bathe and be clean once more. To all intents and purposes I was free to go where I pleased, and though always accompanied by guards, so thoughtful and kind were they that one forgot that they were there to prevent my escape, and we all became the best of

friends. Meanwhile the Shereef of Wazzan spared himself no trouble. No sun was too hot for him to travel, no journey too tiring for him to undertake. He attended the tribal meetings, and made known to the headman the British Minister's intentions with regard to the tribal prisoners, orders for whose release had meanwhile been received from the Sultan. His Majesty's readiness to comply with Sir Arthur Nicolson's request was deserving of all praise, for it must be remembered that the action of the rebels throughout was intended to humiliate the Sultan and his Government. What rendered the situation during my captivity, especially during the first part of it, doubly insecure was the fact that the tribes were in active communication with the pretender to the Moorish throne—the leader of the rebellion in the Riff—and it was proposed over and over again to send me to him as a useful hostage; and, had it not been for the friendship which existed between me and the Anjera tribe, a friendship of long standing, I have no doubt this proposal would have been carried out.

On Saturday, 4th July, a large tribal meeting was held near Sheikh Duas's village, and during the usual wrangling which occurred on these occasions the Shereef of Wazzan arrived, having travelled the twenty-seven miles from Tangier that day, in spite of the heat of the July sun. His opportune presence settled my fate, and the negotiations were brought to a conclusion, not without considerable opposition. The following day a large contingent of tribesmen, the Shereef, and I, set out for Tangier, spending the night some twelve miles from that place. Even here a last attempt was made—an attempt that nearly led to bloodshed—to prevent my release, but happily unsuccessfully. The next morning we moved down towards my own house, which stands alone, some two and a half miles from the town. In a ruined fort a quarter of a mile from my villa a halt was made, and messengers were despatched to town with letters to the British Minister to release the tribal prisoners, who for the last week or so had been comfortably housed in the basement of the British Consulate, having been brought up from Laraiche in specially chartered steamers. Within an hour we saw the sixteen prisoners arriving, and very shortly afterwards they were being welcomed by their friends. Lord Cranley, Mr Wyldbore-Smith, Mr Kirby Green, and Mr Carleton accompanied the prisoners on behalf of the British Legation, but no formal exchange took place. The moment the prisoners arrived I was free to depart, though the many adieux that I had to make with my mountain friends took some little time. We parted on the best of terms, and wild

and savage as the two hundred tribesmen looked, I could not but feel how great a debt of gratitude I owed them for having released me from the dangers and discomforts of my first days of captivity.

For a year after this adventure Raisuli remained tolerably quiet, but the following spring he carried out a coup even more daring. He surrounded the villa of Mr Perdicaris at night, and carried off both the proprietor and his son-in-law. The American Government sent a fleet to Tangier, and the whole world watched the ensuing negotiations. Mr Perdicaris and Mr Varley were restored to liberty, but at what a price! Raisuli demanded and obtained from the Sultan the following terms: That he should be appointed the Governor of all the districts in the neighbourhood of Tangier; that the existing Governor — his former friend, who had betrayed him—should be deposed; a ransom of $70,000, the imprisonment of all his enemies, and the release from prison of all his friends—and other concessions of less importance. The Sultan surrendered, and the terms were carried out. Raisuli found himself all-powerful—a hero in the eyes of the Moors, a menace in those of Europe.

His first acts were good. He put down the effervescence which Bou Hamara's rebellion had caused in the neighbourhood, and he opened the roads to caravan traffic, and since he was made Governor not a single caravan had been robbed within the limits of his jurisdiction. He brought about, in fact, a period of greater security than had existed during the previous year or two; but a security that depended upon Raisuli was naturally a doubtful one.

As his influence increased he became a despot. He squeezed the people under him and extorted money from even the very poorest of the poor. The Makhzen lived in terror of him, and let him know it, with the result that he ignored their orders and commands, and even the treaties with Europe. He threatened and blackmailed even the Makhzen themselves, who openly acknowledged their incapacity to deal with him, and he became at the same time the protector and the scourge of Tangier and the surrounding districts. He enforced his authority up to the very gates of the town, and his armed followers even entered and dragged out of prison men who were not in his jurisdiction. His representative administered justice (!) in the market-place, and beat people to death within a few yards of the French and German Legations. In 1906 Raisuli had reached the zenith of his power. At Zinat it was sufficient to tell a man that he was a prisoner, and he would never attempt to escape. There was no need to lock him up —he knew that his master's arm was long enough to reach him wherever he fled to—and

the strange sight of dozens of prisoners at liberty could be seen there on any day. Raisuli showed all the qualities required by a strong Governor in Morocco, but unfortunately he overdid it. For him there existed no treaties. His and his representatives' actions during the last few months of his governorship are well known. The flogging of protected natives, the cutting off of the electric light, the blackmailing of Europeans, the destruction of property—a long list of acts of unbearable tyranny.

At length the representatives of the European Powers could endure it no longer. They addressed a collective Note to the Moorish Minister of Foreign Affairs at Fez, demanding that an end be made to the impossible state of affairs existing in the Tangier districts. It was almost an ultimatum, for the bay was full of the warships of France and Spain, present to protect European interests until the introduction of the new police. The Sultan and his Viziers could not misunderstand the purport of this Note. The Minister of War was ordered to proceed to Tangier with all available forces.

Early in January 1907 the troops that had arrived from Fez were camped not many miles from Raisuli's stronghold, waiting for orders to attack. News was brought to me that this attack would take place two days later, on Saturday, 6th January, and it was still dark when that morning, at a very early hour, I left Tangier on horseback with three trusted Moors to see what I could of it. I had clothed myself in the flowing dress of a trooper of Moorish irregular cavalry, as I knew that orders had been issued to prevent Europeans approaching the spot, and also so as to be able to move about the scene of action without attracting notice. Before we had emerged into the open country we had passed no less than six outposts of some twenty-five men each, for the Makhzen authorities had been taking great precautions to protect the town; but even the clattering of our horses' shoes upon the paved roads failed to wake a single man from the deep slumber in which they were lying inside their tents. At dawn we were a good many miles away, but we had time to spare, and rode slowly, realising that a long day lay before us; and it was seven o'clock before, from the point of a low hill, the camp of the Shereefian troops was visible in the plain below us. A mile to our left was the famous hill of Zinat, with its rocky crests and precipices, and its steep lower slopes stretching down to the plain, at places dotted with olive groves. Set in the midst of this background stood Raisuli's stronghold, a large rambling building, half-fort, half-house, with windows dotted irregularly about its front, and here and there a battlemented tower rising above the rest of the roof—

a strong building in a very strong position. Away behind Zinat and in front of us rose the higher peaks of the Beni Masour Mountains, range beyond range, until bounding the eastern horizon they were overtopped by the snow-clad summits of Peni Hassan. There were no signs of the coming struggle at that moment. Cattle were feeding near the little villages on the plain, and thin white smoke, hanging heavily in the bright air, issued from the thatched roofs and tents of the plains people as they cooked their breakfasts. In the Shereefian camp there was some movement, and near Raisuli's stronghold his followers could be seen strolling about, while the smoking chimneys of his house bespoke the fact that they too were preparing their breakfasts.

It was nine o'clock before the scene changed. Clear in the still air a bugle rang out in the camp. They must have heard it away at Zinat, for suddenly from the summit of the rocks above Raisuli's fortress a long thin column of white smoke arose, then another and another, and then from peak to peak as far as the eye could reach the fires were answered. The mountaineers were signalling to one another that the great battle was imminent. Down in the camp below us the infantry were "falling in" and the cavalrymen mounting their horses, and it was only a few minutes later when, with the beating of drums and the blowing of bugles, the neighing of horses and the fluttering of coloured banners and flags, the Shereefian troops marched out on to the plain. A hoarse shout arose from every throat, "Ah! salih en-Nebi, Rasoul Allah!" an invocation to the Prophet, repeated again and again, and answered by a far-away and fainter cry of the same words from the fortress and rocks of Zinat.

Once all the troops are out on the plain they are drawn up in formation for the attack. On the right are the artillery, two field-guns, and a couple of Maxims, carried by mules. Near them, amidst a panoply of banners, ride the Commander-in-Chief and his Staff, a group of a hundred or so persons well mounted and gaily dressed, with their bright saddles of every variety of coloured cloth and silk adding to a scene already brilliantly picturesque. In the centre are some 800 infantry with a strong support of tribal cavalry, while on the left a somewhat smaller force forms the flank. The contingent of loyal mountaineers, in their short black cloaks, can be seen already scaling some low hills away on the extreme right. Then slowly the whole army advances.

It is a moment of thrilling excitement. From the rocky hill where I had taken up my point of vantage the whole scene was passing at my very feet. On my left the fortress and rocks; on my right the

slowly advancing forces, the left flank within a hundred yards or so of where I stood. At Zinat there is not a sign of life, though with my glasses I can see the glint of rifle barrels in the embrasures of the house, and now and then amongst the precipices and rocks above it. The troops are within 1200 yards now, and in the open, but still advancing slowly, for the most part in close formation, and offering even at that range—a long one for the Moors, who are proverbial bad shots—an excellent target. The sunlit air is so still that every little sound rises unbroken from the plain below: a word of command here, a bugle-call there. Then suddenly the firing opens from Zinat—the quick nervous spitting of the Mauser rifles—rendered the more impressive from the fact that nothing can be seen, for there is not a single man there who does not use smokeless powder. A few Askaris are seen to fall, killed or wounded, and the advance ceases. The whole army replies, firing at an impossible range into a solid fort and still more solid precipice with rifles that have only reached Morocco after they have long been discarded as useless in Europe, and with powder that issues, evil-looking and evil-smelling, from the barrels of their weapons. After all, it made little difference where they fired, for few or none had ever handled a rifle before, and there was nothing to shoot at. Meanwhile the cavalry galloped to and fro in every direction, except to advance, waving flags and firing their rifles, apparently at the green plover that swept over in flocks, disturbed by the unusual racket.

Inane impotent warfare, carried on by undisciplined and uncourageous men, whose uniforms alone bespoke them as soldiers.

A curl of thin yellow smoke, widening as it ascended, rises from the rocks far above the house—the first shell fired by the artillery, followed by another and another, which, although aimed at the house itself, fall in widely different directions, more than once nearer the Makhzen troops than the enemy. During the entire action of this Saturday, although the range was only about 1000 metres, the house was only struck twice, and even the explosion of these two shells did not force the defenders to abandon the flat roof and windows, though they cannot have failed to be effective. Meanwhile the troops on the left, under the cover of the rocks, had entered and burned a village out of Raisuli's line of fire, and were returning toward the camp laden with loot, under the impression that their duty for the day was over. Nor did any one attempt to persuade them to re-enter the fight, and I watched them disappear staggering under huge mattresses, chests of painted wood—the dowry of every

Moorish bride—and a thousand other household articles. For a background, the burning village, the flames of which rose lurid and roaring into the still air and passed away in great rolls of heavy white smoke.

From one to two o'clock the firing slackened, but at the latter hour another attempt was made to advance. The whole line pushed forward, but 700 or 800 yards from Zinat they broke and—well, if they did not exactly run, they certainly returned very quickly. It was at this moment that two picturesque incidents occurred. From Raisuli's house emerged a woman who, crossing the open ground under a heavy fire, mounted upon a rock and thence cursed the troops. She threw back her thick "haik" and, tearing her hair, waved her arms towards heaven, but the firing drowned her voice. Then slowly and majestically she drew her veil around her and retired. A few seconds later eight men, no doubt encouraged by her bravery, rushed into the open ground, shouting and jeering at the retiring forces, and firing the while with their Mausers. It was then that the Commander-in-Chief fell wounded in the neck. A mule was brought, and, supported by his retinue, he was hurriedly taken back to the camp. By this time the army had used up all their shells and nearly all their cartridges. Even a reserve force, hidden in a riverbed a mile in the rear, had been firing at that range at the mountain ever since the morning, to the imminent danger of their advancing comrades.

The army was now retiring in good order followed by Raisuli's eight men, who every now and then sped a parting shot at them. The battle at Zinat was over. The great effort of the Makhzen had failed, and the stronghold and village, except for a few holes made by the shells, stood as placid and peaceful in appearance as it had been in the morning. The great Shereefian army had proved itself to be—like everything else in Morocco, except perhaps Raisuli himself—a gigantic bluff.

It was well on in the afternoon now, and the scene of the fight was deserted. I crept up a little gully to within 400 or 500 yards of the house, and peeping from between the rocks, I took a long view with my glasses. On the green sward in front of the house stood a man holding a pair of glasses to his eyes. On either side of him were a few retainers. He stood silent and still, watching the retreating army. It was Raisuli.

At dawn on Sunday morning I was back again in the hills near Zinat. Never did the sun rise over a more peaceful scene or one more serenely beautiful. Peak after peak, many touched with snow, turned pink and gold as the first rays of the rising sun touched their summits. At Zinat itself all was quiet. A little blue smoke, the

smoke of wood fire, arose from the chimneys of Raisuli's house, in front of which half a dozen mountaineers were warming themselves over a small bonfire.

It was nine o'clock before the troops left the camp, and deploying in much the same formation as the day before, advanced across the plain. But their numbers were increased, for reinforcements had been hurriedly sent by night from Tangier, and fresh contingents of loyal mountaineers had turned up in force. But what was still more important was the addition of one man, an Algerian artillery officer attached to the Sultan's service by the French Government, whose shooting with the field-guns at Taza and Oujda had largely saved the situation at both places. It had been the intention of the Makhzen to send him on Saturday, but owing to his being a French subject they decided not to do so, as in their own consideration any one to do with France was at this period a person to be avoided. Their folly lost them the day. Had Si Abderrahman ben Sedira been behind the guns on Saturday, Raisuli's house, and probably Raisuli and most of his followers, would have been destroyed. The proof, if one were needed, is this. He accomplished more destruction with the two shells he fired at the fortress on Sunday morning than in the 130 shots fired on Saturday. A general advance toward Zinat was commenced a little before two, and the two shells above mentioned were fired from the field-guns. There was no reply from the house or from the rocks above it. Already the troops were considerably nearer than they had ever got the previous day. A little hesitation was visible, for no doubt the soldiers imagined that they were being allowed to approach to within an easy and certain range. The left were well ahead, led by Raisuli's late Calipha, more royalist than the King nowadays, who was followed close by his contingent of the Fahs tribe. Three hundred yards only now separated them from the village. With a wild shout and a volley from their rifles the cavalry charged. Over the rising ground they passed, a brilliant flash of colour, and never drew rein till they were at Raisuli's door.

The house and village were empty. Then began a scene of pandemonium. Askaris, horsemen, and tribal contingents rushed upon the castle, and the wildest looting commenced. Other bands, intent upon pillage, ransacked the neighbouring houses. In a few minutes flames burst forth from the thatched roofs of the surrounding huts. The flames spread, and in as short a space of time as it takes to write it the whole village was ablaze. The strong wind drove the heavy smoke in huge clouds across the face of the mountain, and in half an hour all that was left of Zinat were the

burning houses from above which Raisuli's fortress towered, as yet but slightly damaged. Then smoke burst out from its windows. The roof, already half blown off by the shells, fell with a crash; a wall toppled over in clouds of dust, and little by little the stronghold became a useless ruin. Not a shot was fired from the mountain, for there was no one to fire one. Silently in the night Raisuli and his followers, and the inhabitants of the neighbouring villages, with all their old people, their women and children, and their flocks and herds, had crept away into the darkness over the plain and on into the mountains. Not a guard had been posted to keep watch, not a blow had been struck to prevent them escaping. Under the rocks upon which I was seated the soldiers, laden with loot, were returning. Carpets, mattresses, boxes, vases of artificial flowers, tea-trays and tea-cups, sacks of flour and grain, rolls of matting —all the belongings and appurtenances of Moorish houses formed their burdens. One soldier, a cheery, kindly-looking giant, was whistling to a canary in a cage, which he had brought away in preference to more valuable loot.

As I rode over the brow of the hill on my way back to Tangier I drew rein for a moment and looked back. The army was leaving Zinat, and the burning houses were little more than heaps of smouldering ashes. Beyond lay the high mountains of Beni Masour, where Raisuli and the inhabitants of his villages must have been looking upon the ruins of their homes.

II.

Raisuli was now completely outlawed. He lived in the fastness of his mountains, where the Sultan's troops could never even attempt to penetrate. Thence he spread alarm right and left, causing constant fears and panics, even to the Europeans at Tangier.

The whole situation in Morocco was seething. The tribes had become to all intents and purposes independent, and many threw off all pretence of obeying the orders of their Governors or of paying taxes. Such as were more vulnerable, either from their geographical position or by their numerical weakness, were persecuted and squeezed to make up for the delinquencies of the others. The rapacity of the Viziers was greater than ever, and the Sultan's extravagances seemed to have increased by the fresh supply of money that an ill-advised foreign loan had a year or two before brought into his spending power. Bou Hamara, the Pretender, in the Riff, and Raisuli amongst the mountain tribes, were the two principal thorns in the Makhzen's side.

With Bou Hamara, who stated that he was the eldest brother of the Sultan, nothing could be done. He remained in the inaccessible Riff tribe-lands, where he governed as a petty Sultan; and even the Spanish authorities, who waited long to see him driven out, were at last obliged to enter into relation with him in order to ensure the security of their "presidios." That Bou Hamara and Raisuli were in communication is certain, but there was little respect and little confidence between them, and except for the passage of letters no compact of real or practical importance seems to have existed between them. Yet that their relations were cordial is clear from the original document in my possession sealed by Bou Hamara with his great seal of State, by which he appoints Raisuli Governor of certain of the mountain tribes. On this seal of State Bou Hamara uses the style "Mohammed ben Hassen," claiming thereby to be Mulai Mohammed, the eldest son of Mulai Hassen, and therefore the elder brother of the reigning Sultan.

Raisuli had no pretensions to the Sultanate, though in the eyes of Europe he played a more important part, for his principal activities were employed in the district of Tangier, the diplomatic capital of the country.

In 1906 that futile Conference of Algeciras—futile, that is to say, in so far as it had any beneficial effect in Morocco—had met, discussed, signed, and separated. It had for Europe, no doubt, cleared the situation, and was a check to Germany; but poor Morocco gained little—in fact, it marked one more step on its road to ruin. Never probably did such a collection of diplomatists, whose high-sounding titles fill the first few pages of that insignificant little yellow-book which contains the results of their insignificant labours, give themselves airs of such importance. For days together they discussed the questions of the import of sporting-guns and the rifling of gun-barrels with all the pomposity of affairs of the gravest moment—to pass to the rules for the distribution of Parcels Post. Three or four men were playing a great stake—representatives of England and France, and of Germany—and it was well played. The victory remained with the two former. The rest were puppets, but didn't realise it. They really thought, or seemed to think, that their endeavours were being of service to the country which few of them knew anything about, beyond the distant view they could obtain of it from the hills above Algeciras.

Northern Morocco was at its worst the year after the Algeciras Agreement had been signed, and even the pleasure-loving Mulai Abdul Aziz perceived that affairs were becoming serious. He decided to open negotiations with Raisuli. For this purpose

Kaid Maclean had an interview with the brigand chief in April (1907). Raisuli listened to the Kaid's proposals, but refused to accompany him to Fez, where the Sultan was then residing. However, a step had been made toward a possible arrangement. A month later, armed with the authority of the Sultan, Kaid Maclean returned to Alcazar, a town on the Tangier-Fez road, situated about sixty miles from the former. But meanwhile it had leaked out that Raisuli would attempt the capture of this important functionary. Every effort was made by the Sultan, who had also received the news, and by the British Legation, to cancel the interview, and the British Consular Agent at Alcazar was instructed to this effect. An interview with Raisuli was secretly arranged, to be held on the borders of the Ahlserif tribe-lands, some few miles from Alcazar. There these two personages met. The Sultan's propositions were made known to Raisuli, who pretended to accept them, and to be disposed to return to Fez with the Kaid. He would, he said, start at once, and if the Kaid would accompany him to the village where his camp was pitched they would set out the next day. The Kaid agreed, and entered the mountains with his host—only there was no setting out the next day, for he found himself a prisoner, and remained in captivity for some seven months, suffering considerable hardships.

Of all the negotiations for the obtaining of the liberty of Raisuli's prisoners this was the most difficult. The terms demanded by Raisuli were preposterous, and a score of people seemed negotiating on their own account, while the Kaid himself was doing his utmost, and very naturally, to obtain his release. The result was confusion and misunderstanding, and the distance from Tangier at which Raisuli kept his captive increased the difficulties. Had the whole affair been left to the hands of Sir Gerard Lowther, who at this period ably represented Britain in Morocco, it is probable that Kaid Maclean's release would have been more quickly obtained. But on every occasion on which a solution seemed near, some perfectly new proposition, emanating from unauthorised sources, would frustrate the official plans. In the end Raisuli obtained £20,000, and he was made a British protected subject; and there were other minor terms. Kaid Maclean was released. The only pleasing aspect of all these brigandage cases was the absolute confidence that Raisuli always placed in the word of the British Government, the British authorities, and, in fact, in that of all Britishers.

Some years after this event, when the ex-Sultan Mulai Abdul Aziz, who had just abdicated, was visiting my villa at Tangier, I showed him two Arabic documents. One was his original "Dahir" for

the nomination of Raisuli as Governor of the tribes, which the brigand had extorted as part of the ransom of Perdicaris, and the other was Raisuli's appointment as Governor of the same tribes bearing another great seal of State, that of the Pretender, Bou Hamara. Mulai Abdul Aziz asked me how I had become possessed of these two documents. I told him. The "Dahir" of the Pretender I had found concealed in a secret cupboard, during my imprisonment in the room of Raisuli's house at Zinat. I had carried it, sewn up in my clothing, with other equally interesting correspondence, during the whole period of my captivity. The firman of the Sultan himself I had obtained the day Raisuli's house was looted by the Makhzen troops, at which picturesque incident I had been present.

The ex-Sultan smiled. "There seems," he said rather cynically, "to be nothing of interest in Morocco which hasn't reached either your knowledge or your hands; nothing that you haven't had given, you—acquired?"

"The most valuable of all things was given me," I replied.

"And that was?"

"Your Majesty's friendship."

He smiled—again that pleasant, cynical little smile—and answered, "I often wonder whether it was God or Satan who gave you the facility of speech."

"Both."

"How both?"

"God gave me, no doubt, my English, for it was the language of my childhood and my country. As to my Arabic, I acquired it at the Court of Your Majesty, and I have hesitated to inquire too particularly who was my master."

It was at this period, while an outlaw in the mountains, that Raisuli nearly made his most important capture. It was an incident that was kept very quiet at the time, but leaked out in the French press a little later. The truth was, we Europeans who played a part—and we very nearly played a very serious part—in the story had no desire for publicity.

The facts were these. The ruins of Raisuli's stronghold at Zinat were only distant from Tangier about fourteen miles, and formed a tempting excursion, but one which no one undertook, as it was notoriously unsafe. However, as time went on and nothing occurred in the neighbourhood of Tangier to disturb the tranquillity, and as Raisuli and his band seemed permanently to have taken up their residence in the mountains at a considerable distance from the scene of their former activities, a picnic at Zinat was decided upon, and I was invited. The other members of our party consisted of Sir Gerard Lowther, then British Minister to Morocco, Monsieur and Madame de Beaumarchais of the French Legation, and Mr Christopher

Lowther, the son of the Speaker of the House of Commons. I formed the fifth member of the party.

One hot summer's morning we rode out, having sent our lunch on in advance. On nearing Zinat we were hailed by a countryman who was ploughing his fields. I rode to see what he wanted, and was informed that Raisuli's band was back at Zinat, apparently having come to take away some treasure which had, by being buried, escaped the looting of the soldiery at the time of the destruction of the castle. He advised us not to proceed. We discussed this news, and in the folly of an enjoyable excursion, decided, *as the lunch was on ahead*, to proceed. Nothing could surpass the tranquillity of the scene on our arrival, and we were soon lunching under the shade of the olive-trees. I confess that the pleasure of the *foie-gras* was mingled, in my case, with a certain nervous apprehension from which the others appeared immune. We did not believe, or had pretended not to believe, the story of the return of Raisuli's brigands.

Lunch was nearly over when the glint of a rifle-barrel in the thick brushwood caught my eye, and another and yet another in the rocks, for the hill at Zinat is a wild precipitous slope of broken masses of rock and scrub. A minute later we were surrounded. The men were perfectly polite, and to all intents and purposes appeared merely to have come to wish us good-day. At their head was the good-looking young Ahmed el-Aoufi, Raisuli's second-in-command, a personal friend of my own, who had shown me considerable kindness during my captivity with the brigands in 1903. He shook us warmly by the hand, and, his rifle between his knees, sat down to pass the time of day. A few yards away, in a complete circle round us, were thirty or forty of his men.

I confess that situations like this exhilarate me. I hate bloodshed and noisy encounters, but a delicate situation has a zest that is unique—and, heavens! it *was* a delicate situation. The British Minister and the French Chargé d'Affaires—what a coup! I was the only member of the party who spoke Arabic, and the suspense the others must have suffered during the next hour or two must have been extreme. Yet no one made a sign. I have often seen great examples of self-restraint, but never, I think, greater than on this occasion. Remember, my friends understood nothing of what I was saying, except that every now and again I referred to them for confirmation of my assertions. For me the situation was very exciting. If I was taken, after all it was only what had happened before, and I was used to adventure and hardship; but for the others! and I could not help thinking of the terms—probably impossible terms—that

Raisuli would demand for their release, and of the possible consequences! I have found on occasions like these—for this was by no means the only tight place of the kind that I had been in—that not only is there a kind of exhilaration, but also that one's power of concentration of thought is accentuated. However inauspicious the actual surroundings may be, one feels and knows that the mental superiority rests with the European, and that hereditary training of thought and education stand one in good stead. The Moor is no fool; he is cunning and astute, but his mind is untrained, and he is confiding when dealing with Europeans. In the first moments of our encounter at Zinat I knew that our safety depended upon the game that I was determined to play—and which I played successfully.

I began with an enormous untruth. Holding El-Aoufi's hand, I told him I was delighted to see him, and that his visit was most opportune—nothing, in fact, could have been better. Then I sat him down, and talked to him and to his chief companions seriously. It was at this moment that Madame de Beaumarchais, with the admirable sangfroid of a talented and courageous Frenchwoman, took a photograph.

The story that I told them was this. I reminded them that Raisuli had been driven from the Governorship of Tangier and the surrounding tribes at the demand of the European Powers. They had acted unwisely and realised it, and now they regretted their action. "Do you know," I asked, "who these people are who are here to-day?"

"We are not sure," they replied.

"Then I will tell you," and I did. Instead of, as would seem natural, trying to conceal the identity of my distinguished friends, I launched out into exaggerated statements as to their importance. I saw I had made an impression. My audience were now thoroughly puzzled.

"And why are they here?" I asked. "Listen, and I will tell you. The Powers of Europe regret Raisuli's departure and disgrace. They desire him to be reinstated, but the Sultan has refused. The Powers insist, and as the Makhzen still holds out, the Governments of England and France have telegraphed to their representatives—the gentlemen you see here to-day—instructing them to visit the scene of the depredations on Raisuli's castle, and to make all the necessary arrangements for its reconstruction as quickly as possible, so that Raisuli can be restored to his own and once more introduce law and order into the region. For this purpose we are come to-day—against the advice of all our friends—so that the work can be undertaken at once. Meanwhile the letter recalling Raisuli from the

mountains is being drawn up." I then added, "We were warned on the way that we should find you here, and advised to turn back; but I told the people who warned us that Raisuli's men would perfectly understand our mission, and nice trouble they would get into with their chief if they captured the very men who were insisting on restoring him to his former grandeur, and obtaining the return of all his confiscated property—and even rebuilding his castle at the expense of the Governments they represent. I should like to see your face, friend Ahmed el-Aoufi, after Raisuli had discovered the 'gaffe' that you had made; and if I know your chief, friend and confidant as you are, I can imagine the stripes he could lay upon your bare back. Do you think that, unless we had been really his benefactors, we should ever have been such fools to have ventured into this hornets' nest? Now, up with you," I cried, rising, "and we will see what we can do with these ruins."

I led the way down to the ruins, and for the next hour measured walls, took notes of the local price of masons and carpenters and the possibilities of obtaining bricks on the spot, proposed a new water-supply which the laws of gravitation rendered quite impossible, and even whispered in El-Aoufi's ear that there would be money to build him a little house adjoining his chief's. We came to the conclusion that for between £12,000 and £15,000, taking into consideration that Raisuli could obtain a plentiful supply of forced labour and as much material as he liked, the house could be restored to more than its pristine glories.

Another photograph taken by Madame de Beaumarchais pictures me pacing out the length of the walls of the house.

My note-book full of figures, I sat down again and dictated to El-Aoufi the following letter, which he wrote: "To the trusted and well-beloved Shereef, the learned Mulai Ahmed er-Raisuli, peace and the mercy of God be upon you; and acting on the instructions of their Governments, of which the letter I sent you yesterday will have given you full particulars, the British Minister and the French Chargé-d'Affaires have paid a visit to the ruins of your Kasbah. They have grieved much to see its piteous state. As you will have learned by the contents of my letter, it is the intention of their Governments not only to restore you to power but also to reconstruct your castle. To-day we are at Zinat, and we had the good fortune to find your faithful and intelligent deputy, my lord Ahmed el-Aoufi, and your followers, who have been of great use to us, and have shown us many things that have helped us, and have guarded us in security and peace from any bad people who may have been about. We are grateful. And my lord

Ahmed el-Aoufi will tell you of many things which in our friendship for you we have confided to him. We will await at Tangier a reply to the letter I sent you yesterday explaining fully those things, and immediately on receiving the reply measures will be taken to commence the restoration of your Kasbah; but it is trusted that you will not wait its completion before returning to your former position, for any delay will only protract the unsatisfactory state of affairs existing at present, and continue the nervousness of the population of Tangier and the oppression of the poor country people. My lord El-Aoufi will tell you all. May peace be with you."

To this epistle I put my signature, and not one pang of conscience did I feel, nor have felt since. Raisuli and I had played many games—only this one was a little bigger than the rest. To tell the truth, so far from feeling guilty, I literally revelled in my deception.

It was time to return to Tangier, and I confess I was nervous. I proposed to El-Aoufi that the others should start first, and that I should remain for a while and catch them up on the road. I wanted to spend, I said, a little while longer in his company—it was a pleasure so rare and so valued.

With a sigh of relief I saw the rest of our party mount. El-Aoufi shook hands with all of them and thanked them for their visit, and they rode slowly away. My fears were at an end.

I sat for half an hour, and explained to El-Aoufi that Raisuli would have already received my (perfectly imaginary) letter of yesterday, which explained the whole situation, and that on his return to his chief in the mountains, some six or eight hours' journey farther on, he would find him fully informed. He (El-Aoufi) must, I added, have crossed my letter *en route*. Had he not met the messenger, whose name I gave—No? Well, then, he must have taken another track. My friends were now no more than little black specks far away in the plain. I rose and embraced El-Aoufi, and in the manner of the country we kissed each other's shoulders. My horse was brought, and cantering slowly down the slope, I rode away toward Tangier.

In spite of the deliberate series of falsehoods of which I had been guilty during those few hours, I never felt less conscience-stricken—and perhaps never happier—in my life.

I have seen Raisuli many times since the incident. He referred to El-Aoufi as a lion of courage.

"There was no finer creature in God's world," I replied, "than the lion, but sometimes the wily jackal deceives him."

I noticed a little flash in Raisuli's eye, but he answered

languidly, "Verily, the jackal is an unclean beast."

Sir Gerard Lowther, the Beaumarchais, Christopher Lowther, and I all dined together the night of our adventure, but we didn't talk very much about it. Our thankfulness for our escape was only equalled by our appreciation of our immense folly in having undertaken the expedition. We agreed that, if possible, the incident was to be kept a secret, but a few weeks later the 'Temps' contained the whole story, which had leaked out from native sources and got to Paris.

I should have liked to have seen the interview of Raisuli and El-Aoufi when the latter related the incident and gave him my letter. He fell from favour for a time, as might be expected, but he came to see me in Tangier a few months later. We did not mention the visit to Zinat, but discussed more general subjects. Talking of the good and bad qualities of mankind, El-Aoufi said, "The most degrading thing in the world is deceit," and he said it quite nastily.

"In my opinion there is something even more humiliating," I replied.

"That is?"

"To be made a fool of."

But we parted the best of friends.

(To be concluded.)

ON HAZARDOUS SERVICE.

BY MERVYN LAMB.

CHAPTER VI.—PRELIMINARY MEASURES.

WE left "soldat" Jean Bart of the French Army and Lieutenant Archer of the British Flying Corps making their way in the moonlight as fast as possible from the German exercise-ground, where in one of the trenches lay the two dead German soldiers.

By the time they had reached the friendly shelter of the hedges, it was quite obvious that the encampment on the far side of the ground was humming like a nest of angry wasps, and parties of Germans with lamps were already on their way down to the trenches to investigate the shots which had been fired by Jean Bart to warn the aeroplane not to land. It was only a matter of minutes before they would discover the bodies of their dead comrades.

"They will see at once from the knife-wounds that the aeroplane did not do the trick," said Jean. "To make quite certain that they should not suspect the inhabitants, I left my 'kepi' in the trench, so we may expect a tremendous hue and cry after a hidden French soldier. We'll get back to the 'caves' in my village as soon as possible, but it won't be safe to stop there long. Come along!" It was now past midnight, the August dawn would be breaking in three hours, and they had eight miles to go. Jean led the way at a great pace, avoiding with the almost uncanny instinct of the smuggler the numerous parties of Germans which were already scouring the country round the exercise-ground. However, once through them, they made their way without serious delay to the wood, in which was the ruined shrine and the hidden entrance to the "caves," and by daylight were safely installed in their hiding-place, close to the foot of the stairs leading up to the room in Adrienne's house, where the German Feldwebel was sleeping audibly.

"There's nothing more to be done now till about eleven o'clock, when we shall hear Adrienne sweeping out the German's room," said Jean, "and then we must decide our future plans. In the meantime you had better go to sleep."

Shortly after eleven Adrienne's broom could be heard banging the furniture above, showing that the Feldwebel had gone out to his lunch. Jean mounted the steps and gave the signal, when they

heard the chest of drawers on the trap-door being removed, and Adrienne's pretty face appeared, framed in the opening, as it seemed to Archer, like an angel of light.

After their previous experience they decided not to go up into the house, but that Adrienne should make her way round by the wood and come in by the secret entrance, where Jean would meet her, and an hour later the three were in solemn conclave in the "caves."

Jean told Adrienne how they had saved the British aeroplane, but that the hunt for Jean was likely to be hot and furious, and that they must get Archer out of the country as soon as possible. This would take a good deal of arranging, and meantime he did not at all like the idea of their staying where they were, as much on Adrienne's account as on their own. The secret of the "caves" might be given away at any time by one of the many inhabitants who were in the pay of the German police.

Adrienne admitted that there was much truth in this, but protested vehemently that her safety should not be considered. "France has need of men to fight for her," said she. "There is little enough that a poor girl can do, and if I could be the means of sending back two soldiers to fight against our enemies, even though I perished in doing so, France would greatly gain and I should indeed be proud. I have no fear, and I will not fail you."

She went on to say that the alarm was already abroad, as the Feldwebel, who worked at the Kommandatur, had told her that morning that an urgent order had been received cancelling all passes which permitted any inhabitants to go more than two miles from the village, and this would surely be followed by a house-to-house search. Also a reward of 5000 francs had been offered for information leading to the capture of an English aviator or a French soldier believed to be hiding in the neighbourhood.

On the strength of the Feldwebel's moral support in the matter of the last visit from the police, she had thought it wise to improve relations with that official. "He is a kind-hearted old man for a German, and thinks only of the end of the war and of getting back to his family and his music shop, and within reason I think he would help me at a pinch," said Adrienne. "And he's very useful in keeping me informed of what the Security Police are doing, so far as they know this at the Kommandatur."

"Ma foi!" said Jean, "that gives me an idea. Where should we be so safe as in my own house, the office of the Kommandatur, if only it could be worked? There is plenty of room for us in the double roof where we used to keep the tobacco, and no one would

ever think of looking for us in the Kommandatur itself. The question is, can we get there unobserved, and once there, can we get out again when we want to? It all depends on what rooms the Germans are using, and whether they are occupied by day or by night."

Adrienne smiled, and remarked that the same idea had occurred to her.

In answer to Archer's inquiries Jean explained the situation as regards his house.

It had four rooms on the ground floor similar to Adrienne's house, two on each side of a centre passage, and one big attic above, reached by a staircase from the centre passage. The special feature was the double roof—a cunning arrangement for concealing tobacco smuggled across the frontier in bulk until it could be disposed of in detail. Unlike the "caves," its secret was known to no one outside Jean's actual band, who were all to be trusted. One of the side walls of the house was double, and in it were the steps by which the space between the two roofs could be reached. The entrance was covered by the false back to a large press, fixed into the corner between the fireplace and the double wall. On the other side was a similar press concealing nothing.

Archer would remember that steps led up from the "caves" to the floor of Jean's house, and these came out under the staircase in the central passage.

The two important points to discover then were, firstly, whether the trap-door under the stairs could be opened from below without assistance from above, since it had not been used for several years. There was also the possibility that the Germans might be using the cupboard under the stairs in which was the trap-door for storing kit. The second point was, whether the room in which was the entrance to the steps leading to the roof was accessible at any time during the day or night.

To Archer's surprise Adrienne quietly observed that she could answer the questions at once. Whilst they had been away she had taken an opportunity to make a thorough reconnaissance of Jean's house. How had she managed it? "Oh, bien simple," she replied. "I hid the Feldwebel's razor, and of course he was in a terrible state of mind about it. Then, after he had gone to the Kommandatur, I found it, so naturally I had to hurry round to tell him. I looked in all the other downstairs rooms before I found him in the back room, but I could not go to the attic nor look under the stairs.

"Then I told him that the house belonged to a relative of mine, and that 'Grand-mère' was very anxious to know if it had been much damaged, and might I just see so as to reassure her.

"Well, I did see, and the cupboard behind the stairs was full of kit-bags, papers, &c.,

and you can't get into the house that way without a confederate inside. Bars have also been fitted to all the downstairs windows. The room with the steps to the roof is used all day as the office of the clerks, including the Feldwebel. There is a bed in one corner, so evidently one man sleeps there at night. The press is empty, and one could otherwise get to the steps quite easily.

"The other back room is the telephone exchange, and the Town Major himself occupies the two front rooms. The orderlies sleep upstairs in the attic, and the barn is used as a garage and as a cook-house for the orderlies. Am I a good scout, Monsieur Archaire?" she added, smiling at the young Englishman.

"Mademoiselle is wonderful," he replied, and the enthusiasm with which he said it brought a faint blush to her cheeks.

"So far so good," Jean said; "but how are we to get into the house? It is evidently no good trying to sneak in at night, as we should certainly be arrested before we got there. We've got to go in in daylight," and Adrienne agreed. Finally a plan was settled upon, which was to be tried in two days' time, and Adrienne left shortly after to make the necessary arrangements, which required a certain amount of working out. In the meantime they were to burn their uniforms that night in the depths of the wood, and on the second day to remove all traces of occupation from the "caves." The hiding of the ladder to the trap-door was also to be arranged for, as Adrienne was positive that the secret was certain to be given away as soon as the reward became generally known.

In that case, the fact that the Feldwebel had been in constant occupation of the room might, it was foreseen, prove very useful to establish Adrienne's innocence of any connection with the secret passage.

Next day both Adrienne and Grandmère complained of terrible earache. As they explained to the Feldwebel, when he inquired sympathetically, it was more or less hereditary. He need have no anxiety as to its being contagious, and Adrienne hoped that he would not dream of leaving the house. They had not had an attack for a very long time, and attributed it now to poor feeding. If they could visit a certain doctor, who lived at Valenciennes, Adrienne thought that he would give them immediate relief; but that raised the question of getting passes.

The Feldwebel expressed a thousand regrets, but pointed out that all passes were stopped owing to the mysterious murders in the neighbourhood, and that he did not think there was any chance that the Town Major would make an exception in their case. Adrienne suggested that if there was no improvement to-morrow, per-

haps with Monsieur's assistance it might at least be worth while to make the attempt. After all, the worst the Town Major could do would be to refuse.

The Feldwebel rather unwillingly agreed, and Adrienne returned to her fomentations, whilst Grandmère groaned audibly in the bedroom behind the kitchen; but the distressing complaint did not prevent Adrienne a little later from handing down a bundle of clothes, which she gave with whispered instructions and much suppressed laughter. When opened out, Archer discovered that one bundle contained a selection of Grandmère's clothes, apparently for Jean, and the other a similar assortment of Adrienne's for himself.

Next day Grandmère was confined to bed, but Adrienne, much of her face swathed in bandages, assured the Feldwebel that they would both be able to visit the Kommandatur during the afternoon, when he was to try and get them a pass. He still maintained that it was a forlorn hope, but Adrienne was firm in her intention to try. Would he not escort them from the house, as Adrienne was shy about going to the Kommandatur alone? And he eventually agreed to take them between four and five o'clock.

By midday Jean and Archer were in the back room, and when the Feldwebel arrived he found Adrienne, still bandaged, waiting for him in the kitchen with Grandmère, the latter also heavily bandaged, under her poke sun-bonnet, whilst a shawl round her neck partly covered her mouth. The old lady was evidently very shaky, as she tottered down the road leaning on Adrienne's arm. The Feldwebel addressed a remark or two to her, getting no reply; and Adrienne explained that she herself heard with difficulty, and that "Grandmère" was practically stone-deaf for the time being.

Shortly after their departure a similar pair left by the back entrance and made for the rear of the Kommandatur, behind which they arrived as the Feldwebel and his party entered the front entrance, where the flying sentry passed some jocular remark to the Feldwebel about the beauty of his lady friends, which evidently rather annoyed that gentleman.

The Feldwebel knocked at the door of the Town Major's room, entered it, and shortly afterwards called to Adrienne and "Grandmère" to join him; but in the meantime a commotion had arisen outside.

Adrienne raised the alarm inside the house by shouting out that the garage was on fire, and as the Feldwebel, followed by the Town Major, came out into the passage, it was indeed only too obvious that one end of the barn was alight.

Immediately the whole place

was in an uproar, the Town Major shouting and cursing and calling every one to come out and help, which, as a matter of fact, was hardly necessary, as every German in the Kommandatur was already making at top speed towards the fire to save his property.

"Grandmère" suddenly became galvanised into life, seized two passes, and stamped them with the Town Major's stamp which was on the table, and then went to the back room, where she opened the big press. At the same time Adrienne made for the back door, where she met the real "Grandmère" and Archer, and directed the latter to the back room to join Jean, whilst "Grandmère" went to the door of the front room. Then Adrienne and Grandmère waited patiently in the passage till the Feldwebel and the Town Major returned, after saving the two cars in the barn and a fair proportion of the other German property.

Needless to say, the two did not get their passes, but were subjected to a great deal of abuse from the Town Major, who was a typical red-faced, thick-necked German, and they were quite glad to get out of the building and back to their home, where they had a hearty laugh at the ease with which they had defeated the hated Huns by the aid of some small French boys, armed only with a box of matches.

As it turned out, Jean and Archer had only changed their quarters just in time, for next day the two Security Police again presented themselves at Adrienne's house.

When the latter, still bandaged up, went to the door to meet them, she observed over their shoulders the mean face of a certain woman who was generally suspected of being in the secret pay of the enemy. The policemen's first question showed her that the game was up so far as the "caves" were concerned. "Has Mademoiselle any knowledge of any underground passages, and is there any connection with the house?"

"But certainly," replied Adrienne, "there used to be a smuggler's tunnel from this house, and I believe the entrance is in the Feldwebel's room, but it has not been used by the smugglers since the war, I think."

By sounding they found the trap-door, which being securely fastened, had to be cut out. Later, they also found the entrance to the cupboard under the stairs in Jean's house; but in both cases the evidence appeared conclusive that neither could have been used recently without the knowledge of the Germans, and the police left, baffled and disappointed, and with an uneasy feeling that they might be surrounded by hidden enemies and never know it.

CHAPTER VII.—THE ADVANCE COMMENCES.

Meantime Jean and Archer were lying between the double roof over the attic. Archer found it comfortable though rather cramped, and judged that it had been used before for a similar purpose, as there were look-out holes by which the attic beneath, as also the main road and the surrounding country, could be clearly scanned. As the attic was generally unoccupied during the day they could talk in whispers, which helped to pass the time.

Jean was particularly pleased with his presence of mind in taking the passes from the Town Major's table; quite an impromptu effort apparently, which might, so he said, save them a lot of trouble later on. By judicious filling in, for which he relied on Archer, the passes would take them across the Franco-Belgian frontier, which would otherwise have been a difficult proposition.

They could not, of course, use them for getting out of the village, as all the inhabitants were known to the guards, and in any case all passes were stopped. However, that part ought not to be too difficult, as he knew the country, but from the frontier onwards across Belgium into Holland was another matter. However, "le Commandant" had given him some addresses before they crossed the lines in the aeroplane, and for the rest they must just trust to good luck and stout nerves.

They would have to stay where they were for two days, whilst Adrienne was making final arrangements for carrying on the intelligence work during their absence; and he explained the very delicate and intricate nature of the chain, which was on the point of completion up to the Franco-Belgian frontier, and which, somewhat to Archer's surprise, was very different to anything of which he had ever read in spy stories.

During the afternoon of the second day, from their look-out hole they saw Adrienne pass down the road and drop a sack which she was carrying.

"Bon!" said Jean; "she will meet us in the wood to-night, and then if all is well we start for Holland. We must just wait till the Boche in the back room is asleep before we open the door of the press, and then trust to luck to get away into the wood. Pray God it's not too light. As regards costume I shall do fairly well as I am, being old enough to pass muster as unfit for any kind of service; but you, Monsieur Archaire, would be spotted at once as being of military age, so you shall continue to suffer from earache, which has affected both your hearing and your speech."

That night, shortly before midnight, snores from the attic

showed that at any rate the main body of the enemy was in the arms of Morpheus, and that there was a reasonable probability that the occupant of the bureau was also asleep.

Creeping down the steps they arrived in the press, and Jean, who was leading, carefully opened the door into the room.

To their dismay there was a resounding bang as a rifle, which had been leaning against the cupboard door, fell on the ground, and the German on the bed on the other side of the room sat up.

Jean had promptly pulled the door to, but evidently the German was not quite satisfied, as, after some little delay, he got out of bed and came across to the press. As he opened the door Jean drove a knife into his heart, and he went down without uttering a sound. But though the crisis was averted for the moment, Archer felt that this development was not at all according to plan, and that their situation was a very awkward one.

Moreover, when he went to the back door it was locked, and footsteps in the road showed that any exit by the front door was out of the question, at any rate for the time being. Obviously the first thing to do was to gain time by disposing of the corpse, and together they carried it into the press and half-way up the steps. They also put with it a small wooden box, which looked as if it might contain something of value, the idea being that for a few days at any rate it might be thought that the German had absconded.

They then stole out into the passage to see if Jean could make anything of the back door. But almost as they got there they heard steps approaching the front door.

"Quick!" said Jean, as he opened the door of the cupboard under the stairs. "Get in!" and he followed and closed the door.

It was, of course, pitch dark inside, but Jean lit a match and Archer could see that they were in a big cupboard or small box-room, half full, as Adrienne had said, of German kit-bags and boxes of documents, forms, &c., which had evidently been put back over the trap-door after the Security Police had made their abortive inspection. Meantime the visitor had entered the bureau, and not finding the usual occupant, was shouting to wake some one in the attic. It was evident that the dead man's absence would soon be discovered, and that there was no time to lose.

Jean whispered to Archer to clear the trap-door, and when this was done they quietly made a pile of paper and placed kit-bags, &c., on the top. By the time that the bonfire was ready, the men in the attic were evidently beginning to stir. Jean carefully lit it, bolted the door, and then as the place filled with

smoke, lowered himself through the trap-door, followed by Archer, and so through their old friends, the "caves," they made their way to the exit in the woods. As they emerged they could see a red glow over the village and hear a confused murmur of many voices.

"With any luck," said Jean, "the double walls will fall in and effectively cremate and bury our friend, Mr Boche. As they knew he was gone before the fire started, they are not likely to look for him in the ruins."

Then his mood changed, and wringing his hands, he said, "Ah! Ma belle maison! ma belle maison!" for the burning of the ancestral home, which is almost sacred to a Frenchman, meant a very real sacrifice; and then his irrepressible sense of humour came to his aid, for he added with a chuckle, "I expect the red-faced Town Major's remarks would be worth listening to at this moment."

Near the shrine they found Adrienne, who had been watching the conflagration anxiously and listening to the noise in the village, wondering what it all meant. She welcomed them with obvious relief, and inspected their disguises thoroughly, adding some deft touches.

It did not take Jean long to give her his final instructions for the Secret Service organisation, and then the time came to part from the brave girl, who in staying was really facing the greater danger.

Archer was not ashamed of a tremor in his voice as he held her hand and murmured something about meeting her again "après la guerre."

The girl, biting her lip, smiled bravely as she thanked him and wished him good luck; but he could see that she had no great confidence in their ever meeting again, though she assured him that as long as she lived she would not cease to pray for the safety of her brave English aviator.

They left her by the shrine, where she would wait until morning would enable her to steal home to "Grand-mère."

CHAPTER VIII.—SOME SET-BACKS.

This is not a diary, and it is not proposed to weary the reader with details of the journey northwards of the elderly peasant and the half-witted youth; how they passed through the great Forêt de Mormal, which already was showing signs of the ravages of German woodmen in search of trench props; how they lay up on the side of the main railway artery which runs from Sédan through Hirson to Valenciennes, watching the long trains pass and waiting for an opportunity to dodge across between the sen-

tries which guarded this vital line.

On two occasions their passes got them out of difficulties, and eventually, after covering some forty miles, they slipped into Mons on the second evening with a crowd of miners, and went to an address which had been given to Jean by "le Commandant."

The occupant, a frail old padré, with the face of a saint and the heart of a lion, received them with enthusiasm, and from him they learnt details of the disasters which the Secret Service had sustained, and received much useful advice for their future guidance. Archer gathered that, generally speaking, things were a good deal easier in Belgium than in France, as the Germans were trying to conciliate the Flemish portion of the inhabitants and to pose as a paternal Government, in neither of which, however, were they meeting with much success.

He explained that they were now in another army area, and that their passes were a positive danger, so he exchanged them for forged papers which would take them to the outskirts of Brussels, and which experience had shown were generally accepted without question. With these they could travel by the "vicinal" railways, provided they did not actually enter the big places, and he gave them some addresses at Hal and Brussels, where they could get help if they required it.

The following day they left, being blessed by the old man in a way which brought a lump to Archer's throat, and making their way out of the town in the cart of a peasant returning from the market, they boldly boarded the "vicinal" at a small wayside station, alighting at a similar station two or three miles out of Hal. They entered the historic town without mishap, and stayed the night with the widow of a Belgian officer, whose address they had been given by the padré.

From her they learnt that it would be dangerous to travel by train any farther with only the passes which they possessed, as the German police had been very active lately, owing to the arrest of spies and the large number of young Belgians who had been escaping into Holland *en route* to join the Belgian Army.

It was a perfect September morning when the two started out on the ten-mile tramp to Brussels, Jean whistling cheerily and Archer feeling that at last he was well on his way to freedom. As passing traffic, including official German cars, took no notice of them, his confidence rose still further; which was no doubt the cause of their undoing, for when only about half the distance had been covered they were suddenly called upon to stop by some German policemen, who had come up behind them in a car, and who had apparently noted the vigorous strides of

the two as being hardly in accordance with their otherwise woebegone appearance.

Fortunately they had been stopped at a place where a wood lined the eastern edge of the road, which, as is usual in Belgium, was marked by a low bank without any kind of fence.

"Run!" whispered Jean; and dodging behind the nearest trees, they plunged into the wood, followed by a fusilade from the police, and then by three of the men who jumped out of the car. Although the few days' exercise in the open air had done a certain amount to restore Archer's condition, he soon found that he was in no state to stand a long chase, and quickly began to show signs of distress.

Their pursuers were close on their heels, so Jean, observing that his bolt was nearly shot, motioned to Archer to head to the left, whilst he himself went to the right, making a great noise and successfully drawing away the pursuers.

Archer, thus left to himself, was in some doubt as to his best course of action. He had no idea as to the extent of the wood, and the police might return at any time, possibly with reinforcements, and then he would be caught like a rat in a trap.

He decided to put a considerable distance between himself and the car, and perhaps to return at night to try and find Jean. Making his way eastwards he soon reached the far edge of the wood, from where he could see a large forest about half a mile away across absolutely open cultivation, through the middle of which ran a railway. He remembered that this would be the Forêt de Soignies, which he had noticed on the map as being familiar to him from reading accounts of the battle of Waterloo.

As he had feared, the wood he was in was far too small to hide him for long, so he boldly walked out into the open, and had gone two-thirds of the distance when he heard shouts from the railway and saw that two of his late pursuers were already after him, followed by some men who had been working on the line.

Fortunately he had now got his wind again, whilst Jean had taken a good deal out of the police, and he gained the forest with a comfortable lead. Once in its friendly shelter he felt that he was fairly safe for the time being, and he proceeded eastwards in a more leisurely fashion.

Then he remembered his bandages. What a fool he had been not to take them off before, as they marked him out to his pursuers from a mile off.

At dusk, in pursuance of his intention to try and find Jean, he made his way back to the west edge of the forest and looked cautiously out. A German cyclist passed at that moment and he heard him stop and talk to another German whom he could not see. Evi-

dently the road was being patrolled, and it would be folly for him to attempt to get back to where he had parted from Jean. The only chance was to make his way to the Brussels address and wait for Jean there, so having come to this conclusion, he turned back into the wood, but soon found that he had no idea of direction, and he decided to try and sleep till daylight.

All next morning and afternoon he wandered in the forest, until in the evening he found himself near what was either a village or possibly a suburb of Brussels. He waited till dusk, and then feeling faint from want of food, he took his courage in both hands and entered the main street of what from a notice at the entrance he ascertained was Groenendael.

There were not many people about, and after some hesitation he selected a middle-aged woman dressed in black, evidently returning from shopping, and he followed her to a small villa. As she opened the gate into the little front garden, he went up to her, and taking off his cap, said, "Madame, I am an English Flying Officer, trying to escape to Holland, and very hungry."

The woman glanced hastily to right and left, saying, "Come in, Monsieur, quickly," and she opened the front door of what was evidently a small tradesman's house. Once inside she seized both his hands, saying, "Monsieur will be safe with me. How the Boches would love to catch him, for they are terrified of the English aeroplanes, and we Belgians accordingly love the brave English flying men."

Her husband, who would shortly arrive from Brussels by the evening train, would also be delighted to hear all that was happening "over there." But Monsieur looked ill and tired, and so young too! "Ah, le pauvre garçon!" she would make him some hot food at once, but she could not offer him the hospitality she would like, as they were all on rations; and then he must go to bed and rest till the morning.

The husband arrived a little later, and from him Archer learnt that he could not travel by train without a pass, and that he also ought to have an identity card, which might be demanded at any time. The best chance of getting in safely was to take the tram which ran to the Schaerbeek quarter, where the street which Archer wished to reach was situated. At Madame's suggestion they fitted him out with old clothes of Monsieur's, for which the couple indignantly refused any payment, and which gave him the appearance of a struggling shop-assistant, and so attired Archer next morning bade farewell to the courageous and kindly Belgians and boarded the tram for Brussels. The car was crowded, but he reached the point where he

had been told to change without incident. By this time the streets were packed with people of every description, and as Archer stood waiting for his tram he saw out of the corner of his eye two German policemen who, he fancied, were looking at him. He decided to shift his quarters at once, and jumped into the first tram which passed, and which was full inside, so he had to stay on the platform outside. The Germans jumped on after him, and whilst one went within to examine the passengers, the other, standing with his back to the interior, asked in French for Archer's papers. Archer moved his left hand towards his pocket as if to get them out, and at the same time brought his right across on to the German's jaw, sending him reeling back into the interior, where he fell full length over the passengers' feet.

The tram was travelling at top speed, but Archer jumped off, falling on his face, somewhat to the amusement of the passers-by who had not seen the episode in the tram, and then picking himself up he walked quietly down a side road, round some blocks of buildings, and so to the Botanical Gardens. From there he kept to the main "Rue Royale," off which ran the street of which he was in search, and which he found without further trouble.

Number 15 was a dairyman's shop, over which was the name "Vanhuisen," and not the name given to Archer, which was merely Pierre, and inside behind the counter stood a fresh-complexioned girl who certainly would not be Pierre.

However, he had no alternative but to follow his instructions, so he walked in and said in his best French, "I wish to see Pierre," at the same time handing her half a five-franc note. It was an anxious moment, and his relief was intense when she showed the way into a small back-room before going upstairs to fetch her father, who Archer rightly concluded was Pierre, and who proved to be a burly middle-aged man of strong Flemish type. To him Archer told his story, and was much depressed to learn that nothing had been seen or heard of Jean, though Pierre had received a warning from Holland that he might be coming through.

However, as Pierre pointed out, it would take time to complete the arrangements for getting Archer across the Dutch frontier, and he might turn up in the meantime.

And this surmise proved correct, for two evenings later Jean appeared and was overjoyed to find Archer. He also had passed through the Forêt de Soignies, had been chased again and driven towards Louvain, and after covering some forty miles had made his way into Brussels from the north. After hearing Archer's story he congratulated him on his

skill, and laughed heartily at the tram episode and the success of "la boxe." He suggested, in fact, that Archer could now take care of himself, and that he, Jean, should not cross the frontier, but return to Adrienne and prepare for Archer's next flight over the lines. The latter, however, pointed out that intelligence work was really not his business, and that it was very doubtful whether the authorities would let him cross the lines again in any case, since the facts of his escape into Holland, if they ever got there, would certainly be reported by German spies, and he would be a marked man.

Jean finally agreed that he would have to accompany Archer back to headquarters to talk things over with "le Commandant."

Some mornings later a milk cart left Brussels by the St Nicholas road driven by an elderly countryman, by whose side sat a fresh-complexioned girl, whilst behind with the milk-cans was a youth dressed in a blue smock and chewing a straw.

The guards at the exit to the town found that the photos on the passes tallied with the bearers, and that the official stamps were perfectly in order, all of which proves that the Belgians had little to learn in the way of artistic forgery. The cart covered the twenty-five miles to St Nicholas that day, where the girl handed them over to a local grocer, of Dutch-Flemish extraction, whom we will call François, and who combined the smuggling of butter and other foodstuffs from Holland with work of some national importance, which was also a source of considerable profit to himself.

At a price he was prepared to "pass" anything across the frontier in either direction, from an egg to an escaped prisoner, and to this end he usually bribed the German guards with the butter and hams and other food for which their soul longed, and which he could well afford, since he made some 200 per cent clear profit on the remainder. At the same time it is only fair to add that he carried on a part of his business at the risk of his life, and, as he himself was wont to observe, "surely the labourer is worthy of his hire."

A prosperous-looking individual, whose rotundity was in marked contrast to the vast majority of the half-starved and anæmic population, he received Archer and Jean courteously, and at once got down to business. He explained that at the present time things were rather difficult, as about three weeks before a large party of young Belgians, instead of using his organisation, had decided to save their money and to force their way across the frontier, in doing which they had killed several Germans, with a loss of some ten of their own party. In addition to causing very strained relations all round,

the German higher authorities had been very much annoyed, and a fresh regiment had been sent up from Beverloo to replace the old one, which had gone to the front—to its intense disgust. Some of the men had, in fact, deserted into Holland with his assistance—a coup of which he was particularly proud, as he had been paid by both the Germans and the Allies for the same service. The new troops were dismounted cavalry, and François so far had not been able to re-establish the cordial relations which had existed previously to the great advantage of all concerned. Some of the guards were open to persuasion, but they wanted higher fees, and he himself had been compelled to raise his prices accordingly. Jean, as a brother smuggler, would appreciate the unfortunate necessity.

However, for 500 francs a head he thought he might be able to get Jean and Archer across in about a fortnight's time, when he would be organising a party. They must remember, he added, that Archer in particular would be a big prize for the Germans, and that the services which he proposed to render them were all the more valuable on that account.

Jean, who had been listening with growing indignation, could contain himself no longer, and burst out—

"Are there, then, no patriotic men in Belgium who are willing to take some risks for their country? We French smugglers have very different ideas."

Archer, who saw that they could not afford to make an enemy of the man, calmed Jean, and told François that they would consider whether they could wait so long as was proposed, since he personally was anxious to get back to his squadron as soon as possible. Whether they accepted his help or not, Archer could assure Monsieur that he would not be the loser by anything which he might do to help them in the meantime, and amicable relations having been outwardly restored, the two retired to the cellar which had been placed at their disposal.

There Archer pointed out that 1000 francs was not a great sum for the British Government to pay, and that they actually had the money, but Jean flatly declined so far as he was concerned to put good money into the pockets of the "low hound." The attitude of that individual evidently, in his opinion, struck a blow at the prestige of the honourable trade of smuggling, and wounded Jean in a Frenchman's tenderest spot — his "amour propre." That one smuggler should attempt to make money out of the safety of another, particularly in wartime, was unheard-of baseness, and he would never accept the help of such a person. In a day or two he would learn the ropes, and then they would

teach that gentleman that dealing with a Frenchman was very different to making money out of Dutchmen or "braves Belges."

It was a physical impossibility for Jean to sit quietly in one house for any length of time, and Archer did not see much of him for the next two days, though he imagined he was carrying out his intention of learning the ropes. On the third day he gave Archer the result of his investigations, which were to the following effect.

The Dutch frontier was about nine miles away, and the intervening country was dead flat, mostly grass land, and much cut up by water-channels of every size and description. To approach within five miles of the frontier was absolutely forbidden, without going through formalities which were out of the question for them. On the frontier itself were two wire fences 100 yards apart, the intervening ground being quite bare. There were German pickets every 400 yards, searchlights about every half-mile, and worst of all, the farther fence, which was six to eight feet high, was electrified, and to touch it meant certain death.

There were, however, ways of dealing with it, and the simplest seemed to be to throw two planks hinged together over the fence, so that the hinge rested on the top and the planks touched the ground on either side. Slats nailed across the planks would enable them to walk up and so over, and he had all preparations in train, so they ought to be able to start the following day. On that night a party of young Belgians were going to try and rush a German picket. If it came off it might help them, but he had no great confidence in these Belgians.

That night Archer told François that they were going to try to get across, as they could not wait for his party, and asked him what he would consider fair remuneration for the services he had rendered them, reaching an amicable settlement with unexpected ease, once the grocer saw that they really meant going with or without his help. He was evidently anxious to keep on good terms with the British, as he begged Archer to tell their Intelligence Service that he was always ready to serve them, and that he knew of many excellent "tips" for getting messages across the frontier; which confirmed the impression already formed by Archer, that the aforesaid Intelligence Service carried a good deal of weight in those parts, and gave him confidence that they would meet with no further difficulties on their way to England once they got across into Holland.

CHAPTER IX.—OVER THE TOP.

Next afternoon a farm cart full of straw from a local threshing-machine made its way out of St Nicholas and along a narrow poplar-bordered road leading to the frontier village of La Clinge.

At one point it stopped, and our friends under the straw had some anxious minutes; but evidently the driver was a well-known local peasant, for after a perfunctory prod or two into the straw with a bayonet, one of which just missed Archer's leg, the cart was allowed to proceed.

After jolting along the road for about two hours it turned into a field, stopped near some ricks, and the driver removed some of the straw off the cart, when Jean and Archer emerged, very red in the face and picking straw out of their necks.

Keeping a sharp look-out on the road, the party then proceeded to empty the waggon, last of all pulling out a hinged plank, which they hid in a water-cut near by, and then they reloaded the waggon with corn for the return journey to St Nicholas.

Archer took stock of his surroundings, and found that they were to the east of the road leading into a village which, as Jean informed him, was St Gilles Waes. In every direction the country was cut up by parallel drainage channels, and he saw they were not going to have an easy job to make their way to the frontier in the dark, even with the aid of a compass, which Jean now produced and with which he took a bearing. They waited impatiently for several hours until it was nearly dark, and then commenced a wearisome tramp across the lush meadows, using the plank for crossing the smaller channels, which occurred almost every 100 yards, and heading for the line of searchlights, which flashed at intervals away to the north. After what seemed like several hours of slow progress they reached a fair-sized canal, which they had to swim, and Jean whispered that they were now quite close. Archer looked at his watch, and saw that they still had nearly an hour before the Belgians were supposed to be going to try and rush the post at La Clinge, and then they crawled cautiously forward till they reached the first wire fence, where, wet and shivering, they lay hidden in the long grass. When the searchlight came round he could see that Jean's description had been correct, for in front the grass was cut fairly short, whilst beyond it the sinister electrified fence, with its thick power-cable along the top and the bare insulated wires below, stood out bright and gleaming against the blackness beyond.

Archer timed the searchlights, and found that they alternated from side to side

every two minutes. Theoretically they apparently were meant to be swung round together, so that the fence was always lighted; but in practice he noted that they were being carelessly worked, and that often for as long as half a minute the fence was in darkness. La Clinge was about half to three-quarters of a mile to their left, whilst 200 yards in the same direction was a picket of three men, and another picket about the same distance to their right, both fairly close up to the electrified fence, no doubt to enable them to fire towards Belgium rather than into Holland.

Presently a mounted man came along, probably an officer going his night rounds, and when he had returned towards La Clinge the anxious watchers saw the Germans begin smoking, and then one after another lie down. There was still no sign of any Belgian attack from the direction of La Clinge, though it was now considerably overdue, and as it was well past 1 A.M. it was high time for action. After a whispered consultation they decided to try and rush one of the pickets, as being easier than tackling two coming from opposite directions; also to their right was an old watercourse which had been badly filled in and which gave a certain amount of cover, running as it did from their fence to within ten yards of the picket on their right front and on its far side. Cautiously they crawled round through the grass to the end of the depression, and as the lights went off, got through the fence and lay down until the beam had again passed and gone. In the next dark interval they got half-way across, Jean leading, pistol in one hand and the hinged end of the plank in the other, whilst Archer carried the rear ends. The next advance took them to within thirty yards of the picket, which still showed no signs of having observed them, and they waited breathlessly for their final rush until the light had gone. It passed, but as they rose shots rang out to their left, and a confused babel of voices from the direction of La Clinge told them that the Belgian "push" had started. Instantly the picket jumped up and seized their rifles, and round came the searchlight on the right, fortunately full in the eyes of the Germans, who had already turned to meet the unexpected attack. Jean's pistol barked and one went down, and then as he and the remaining two Germans fired simultaneously, a second German fell, whilst Jean's pistol was shot out of his hand. "Run for the plank!" said Jean, and when Archer returning threw it over the fence, he saw three more Germans about 300 yards away on the right running towards them, and Jean struggling with the third man of the first picket close to the fence a few yards away. As Archer was on the point of

going to his assistance, Jean, with a mighty heave, hurled the big German against the electric wires. There was a blinding flash, and the German crumpled up in a sickening fashion. "Over you go," shouted Jean, and as Archer made the perilous ascent, a bullet and then another whistled past his head. Had the Germans not stopped to fire at Archer they might have made certain of Jean, but as it was, the latter got over with a bullet through his coat and a sprained hand, giving a final derisive shout of "à bas les Boches!" as he reached the ground and made off into Holland.

Only the spoils of war in the shape of two planks and one damaged pistol remained in the hands of the discomfited Germans, and these the two brothers-in-arms were content to have exchanged for the decorations which they received at a private investiture a week later.

When they related their experiences to "le Commandant" at headquarters, there was only one point on which they could not and never have been able to agree; for whilst Archer considers that the Belgian "push" actually helped them, Jean is most emphatic that the unpunctuality of "les braves" nearly cost the two their lives.

But then, Jean's view is perhaps distorted by recollections of a certain half-bred Belgian grocer, who had the impertinence to call himself a brother smuggler, whilst Archer, on the other hand, has tender memories of the courageous and kindly folk who helped him in his great need.

IN THE LITTLE NEW COUNTRIES.

BY MAJOR LINDSAY BASHFORD.

I.

By the time I arrived at that shabby, excitable, out-at-elbows, but still proudly romantic city which is Warsaw, all menace of capture by the Bolshevik was over.

He had come dangerously near, and in outlying suburbs his wrath had been let loose. The thunder of his guns, had he possessed enough of them, might well have shattered the not too clean windows of the Bristol Hotel, with its throng of staff officers, journalists, Semitic army contractors, and spies. His aeroplanes, had he possessed any petrol to be spared from generals' and commissaries' motor-cars, might have created due panic in those narrow cobbled streets or amongst the gilded youth lunching valorously at Brühls' and getting no nearer the front than the luncheon table.

Fortunately, at the emergency, the Poles, all but done for, had swept, as that strange riddle the Slav temperament will do at times, but erratically, from the heights of self-satisfied enthusiasm to the levels of common-sense. They had turned for advice to the French, and the French did not fail them.

This must remain unforgettably to French credit, for a large and able French Military Mission—at times some four hundred officers strong—had been at work for many months in Poland with but niggardly appreciation. When Poland, as a nation newly-fledged, launched out into warfare with Bolshevism, the flamboyant buccaneer who fights eternally with the romantic dreamer in the Polish temperament ranged paramount. Poland resuscitated, cried these unpractical people, could do everything; they would just show the regarding world what they were capable of. It was kind of you to come, said Poland in effect to their very war-worn and experienced French advisers, but we are historically a nation of warriors and can tackle these little matters ourselves. We are accustomed to acting as bulwark of Western culture. We are word-perfect, and can dispense with the prompter.

Poland demanded the limelight, and by its aid Bolshevism came within an ace of destroying Poland. Yet throughout Poland I found a marvellous store of patriotic devotion and ardour. Those wholesome country youths, scantily and shabbily equipped, who marched through the Warsaw

streets in the almost continual autumn downpour of rain, and sang as they marched with a musical zest and exhilarating precision such as I have never heard troops equal — these youths, so simply pious as they knelt in their churches, so friendly and ingenuous to talk with, had all the keenness of Britain in 1914. They did not know very much about their war, but they burned to fight for their country. Many of them were just sturdy cheery children.

But Europe had learned, if Poland had not, that men alone do not make an army. Blankets are necessary as well as bravery. There must be an organisation behind the line— of food supply, rifles, ammunition, clothing, hospitals, and repair shops. System, hard-and-fast, close, concise, must be here, and it was just at this point that the Polish temperament was at its happiest-go-lucky.

It is, perhaps, hard for a handsome and dapper young bulwark of Western civilisation to sit for fourteen hours a day at an office table working out time-tables of food and forage trains over a long and erratic front, and especially if the vehicles at his disposal are chiefly shaky country carts. But much of warfare consists of very humdrum labour. and it was in the incoherence and lack of painstaking seriousness amongst Polish officers that the chief weakness of the Polish army was to be found. The Pole has perhaps acquired something of the Latin sense of conscious dramatic effect. Theatricality has ruined many a campaign. It nearly ruined this.

Into this half-desperate, half-artificial, wholly muddled business of the Polish retreat upon Warsaw there came suddenly, like a swift keen spear-head, the French interposition. The Foch principles of warfare, tested in conflicts to which these were but teacup storms, and applied in Poland by Marshal Foch's former Chief of Staff, bold and astute General Weygand, extracted victory from imminent disaster, and the Bolsheviks scuttled back as fast as they had advanced.

Enter once more this strange complex temperament of the Slav! The dramatic suddenness and overwhelming completeness of the Bolshevist repulse appealed enormously to the buoyant Pole, and swept him to undreamed-of heights of enthusiasm and energy. Moreover, he had been taught a salutary lesson which he was quite acute enough to take to heart. In the subsequent advance he was flamboyantly at his best. The advance carried him so far that, when at Riga I watched him in the diplomatic duel for peace terms with very astute Bolshevik opponents, he was able to claim and to obtain very considerable tracts of territory, and several other good things as well. He triumphed and, true

to type, did not consider the future.

Thus it happened that before I had been many days in Warsaw the Front was well beyond a day's motor trip. When we extended the range of our investigations and discovered it, the effect was somewhat of a gigantic elongated Gruyère cheese. The holes were so many and so large that we never really knew, as we motored, whether the next troops encountered would turn out to be "Polos" or "Bolos."

In this war there was nothing of the ruthless completeness, the huge, close, complex organisation of trenches, the daily suspense and the nightly horror that we have come to associate with the word "war." But there was a great deal in this pleasant countryside that was cheery and simple, and, often living mainly on it, the troops on both sides nearly always seemed well fed.

And always in this strange conflict between Poles and Bolsheviks during the autumn months of 1920 there seemed to be a suggestion of comic opera. At that time, for instance, casualties in Ireland were heavier during a week than those on the Polish front during a month. As the very able correspondent of 'The Times' wrote, these doughty battles were more a matter of "morale" than of bloodshed. Each side tested tentatively, with what resources it had at its disposal, the strength of the other at a given point. Convinced of weakness, the weaker tactfully retired and duly the stronger advanced. A great deal of ground was covered during this process, but it was seldom, except in street fighting, that much damage was done. One could not help recalling the careful manœuvres of Italian mercenaries of the Middle Ages, whose laudable ambition was to get as much profit as possible out of war with the minimum of risk to personal safety. At times there seemed to hang over the whole proceedings a curious air of unreality. Yet every one knew that the issues at stake were desperately serious.

Strange, childish Poland, half Parsifal, half Mazarin! A Government dominated by the sense of patriotism had rung the changes on all kinds of social sacrifices, which made many people exceedingly discontented and the remainder seek and arrange surreptitious enjoyments. There was no legal sale of alcoholic drinks except an excessively pallid beer, yet wine was nearly always available, served in teacups. Working hours of shops and cafés were much curtailed. There was no public dancing. The result of these restrictions was simply to irritate people and to fill the streets with aimless loafers, a prey to the hysteria of rumour and apt to sudden and meaningless violence. In time of war the last step a government should take is to restrict unduly the distractions of the

people. Sacrifices should not be artificially imposed; war itself will provide sufficient. The impulsiveness and self-conscious dramatic sense of the Pole dragged into play a series of restraints which defeated their own end.

During this perilous autumn food was fairly plentiful. Good vegetables and fruit stocked the shops, and markets were well supplied. To me, at least, the evidences of extreme poverty were far fewer than in the industrial districts of Germany. As everywhere, those who suffered most were of the "black-coat" class, people of fixed income without means of augmenting it, while prices rose relentlessly.

And yet this pathetic and wistful city earnestly sought to re-establish the old Polish tradition of literature, art, and the glamour of a finely cultivated life. In the throes of war the opera began its season with "Aïda" and "Rigoletto." Book-shops were daily thronged. Symphony concerts were arranged. Everywhere there were suggestions of the old artistic Polish spirit, freed from German or Russian oppression, itself again—buoyant, ardent, unpractical!

What kind of nation would emerge from all this? Would it be the former dreamy and romantic Poland, half exquisite, half squalid, and utterly unsuited to cope with modern economic and political conditions? Or would it be a new Poland, rising phœnix-like from the ashes of degradation, harder and clearer-sighted, braced by the bitter discipline of subjection, and competent to hold her own? "The Germans," said a Pole to a well-known French publicist, "have taught us work, order, discipline. What we have learned from them we shall use against them." Many doubt if Poland has yet learned these lessons, or if she is even capable of doing so. Travelling from Posen, which had been German, into the Poland which had belonged to Russia, I seemed to pass abruptly from an area of efficient if unimaginative organisation into one of perhaps equal content, but pervading slackness and easy-going haphazard.

M. Clemenceau, greeting at the Peace Conference Paderewski, Prime Minister of Poland, looked curiously at the great virtuoso in his new *rôle*. "Vous êtes le fameux pianiste?" the Frenchman inquired. Paderewski bowed. Clemeanceau regarded him gravely. "Quelle chute," he murmured.

A parable lies in the anecdote. For, side by side with the Slav passion for beauty and romantic adventure there resides the passion for intrigue and an inexhaustible capacity for petty jealousy and feud. Humour is not a distinguishing quality of the Slav, and temperamentally he is always apt to lose sight of the wood in his absorbed scrutiny of the trees. Paderewski, artist pure and

simple, is now looked upon as having played his part; with genuine reverence he is regarded as a Lafayette hero, the figurehead of Poland reborn, but now relegated to merely ornamental tasks. Professional intriguers hold the field.

I found Warsaw a hotbed of intrigue and petty conspiracy. Propaganda was rampant. Military reports were so appallingly and ingenuously misleading as to be laughable; captures of prisoners, weekly far exceeding the sum total of any possible Bolshevist force, were cheerfully announced to a credulous public; and one adventurous Bolshevik army, operating near Lemberg, was completely annihilated four times in a fortnight. Struggling to disentangle what was true from what was false—or even, *faute de mieux*, what was possible from what was palpably absurd—one often recalled the aphorism, much quoted at that time: There are only two really stable and straightforward Poles — the North Pole and the South Pole!

Political intrigue was equally disheartening. At a time when, with an enemy at the gates, only a provisional government and an independent political experience of but a few months, harmony and a clear direct public policy were vitally necessary, Polish politicians plunged with apparent relish into a morass of small intrigue and sectional jealousies, so that it seemed at times as if the machinery of State were kept in motion by one man only—no politician, but a vigorous and energetic soldier—the Chief of the State himself, Marshal Pilsudski.

How significant now became the fact that when, a few months earlier, Poland had set out to elect a provisional Seym or Parliament, the country immediately split up into no fewer than fourteen political parties!

French backing cannot go on for ever. Sooner or later Poland must stand on her own feet. Pilsudski has a motto: Never tell a child that it cannot knock a nail into a wall with its own head. Nations, like individuals, must in the long-run work out their own salvation. The process may be bitter, but it is inevitable. Bolshevism has withdrawn only to advance again, for whatever may be the fate of the present Soviet Government in Russia, beaten badly in the field and confronting a wretched harvest and certain famine, the idea of Bolshevism is too deeply rooted to be torn up by a single unsuccessful venture, and, counting by devoted adherents, Lenin is to-day by far the most influential man in Europe.

General Weygand loves to quote an unforgettable saying of his great master Foch, and in it one may find not only the secret of military strategy, but also, to some extent, the fine expression of the boldness

and simplicity of action necessary to the establishment and safe maintenance of a state in the modern world. Foch said on the Marne: "My right is threatened; my left is retreating; my centre is smashed—I attack."

II.

The first hint of the spirit of Bolshevism came in a little village from which only that morning the Bolshevik invaders had been expelled by triumphant Poles. The tiny community was thrilling with regained freedom.

The tall old village priest stood in his sunny parlour and discussed the events of the past weeks. He had a wise and tolerant philosophy of life which, I think, is characteristic of Polish priests. His surroundings were frugal, even austere, but his genial and charitable mind knew much of human nature. Life can be learned as surely in a village as in a metropolis.

Two Soviet leaders had been billeted on him during the Bolshevik occupation. They formed part of the administration which the Russian Soviet Government had already organised to "take over" Poland immediately upon the occupation of Warsaw. Fanatics, they were obviously of the Russian "intelligentsia," and I think their dialectic as they argued upon religion and politics with the old man had been rather too much for him. But that disturbed him less than the extreme austerity of their appetites. Only tea would they drink, and on tea they vigorously reconstructed the world. Never would they, like he, consider the wine that was genially red—he gave us a bottle—and a casserole of chicken they had regarded as quite an unnecessary surrender to the baser inclinations of man. The wise old fellow shook his head. "Beware of idealists," said he.

Later when, at Riga, Poles and Bolsheviks were compromising on a peace which would do away with the necessity of a winter campaign—in which assuredly half the soldiers would decline to join, and to pay the other half there was no cash—I came to feel closer sympathy with the priest. I dined with the Bolsheviks at Riga, and they reconstructed the world on lemonade.

But the priest's phrase was in its way greatly enlightening. The early, very ignorant idea of Bolshevism presented it as a gigantic, crude, and devastating juggernaut, crushing out of existence the old régime in Russia, and doing so with terrible and wholesale brutality. This view was absolutely right, but it was not complete. In the spring I saw in the great manufacturing area of the Ruhr valley in Germany a very dif-

ferent and extraordinarily impressive experiment in Bolshevism, where an army of young enthusiasts had taken possession with the utmost confidence of this immensely wealthy district, which includes such places as Essen, Elberfeld, Solingen, and Dusseldorf, with world-wide interests, and were trying both to reorganise it on Bolshevist lines and to defend it against the Government troops. There was no brutality, no "sabotage," but much sheer fanaticism and the sad willing sacrifice that fanaticism always entails. The experiment failed, but the spirit of it was exactly that of the village priest's phrase in Poland: Beware of idealists.

From this one may draw certain conclusions. Bolshevism is a far more serious enemy to organised communities than has as yet been realised, simply because it is as highly organised as the communities themselves. Russians may be living on bird-seed, but Bolshevism lives on ideals. Bolshevism has long ceased to be merely Russian; it is a world movement, and adapts its methods to the scene of its operations. Its hold, for example, on Germany is immense, but it does not attempt to apply to the highly civilised population of Germany the crude methods of ascendancy which it applied in Russia. To the Russian peasant all that seemed desirable was the annihilation of the old state of affairs. The passion of the German is to regain a "place in the sun." The Bolshevist programme shrewdly adapts itself to the ambitions and circumstances of its victim. Hence its strength.

Before long I was to encounter Bolshevism at closer quarters. My next adventure, however, must be northward to the Baltic, to gain some impression of those little new countries, Lettland, Esthonia, and Lithuania, which had wrested longed-for freedom out of the turmoil of war, had fought gallantly one enemy after another, and now had gained both recognition and respect. The first stage of this adventure was a night's journey from Warsaw to the free city of Danzig. There, in the crisp bright sunshine of a Baltic autumn, I once more watched at their work the most indomitable idealists in the world—the British.

III.

I know of few spectacles more exhilarating than that of the British soldier to-day in one of the conquered or liberated countries of Central Europe. Whether it be a couple of spruce N.C.O.'s crossing the Cathedral Square at Cologne, a dapper sergeant-clerk of one of the Missions

at Berlin, or a party of merry young privates playing by the roadside with shyly delighted village children—one and all, by their smartness, their radiant cleanliness and health, their funny British elder brotherly kindliness to the people round them, are making their country immensely respected, often amid surroundings of squalor and sullen suspicion. I believe that each of these young men really does feel in the heart of him that he represents Britain in a strange place, and must do so worthily. If you want to see how smart khaki and puttees can look on a straight well-grown lad, visit Cologne under the British!

The bitterness felt between nations at war is seldom, except in action, so deeply reflected amongst individuals. The attitude of the British in Germany after the war vividly illustrated the British character. First, there was the boyish instinct to shake hands after a stiff fight in which the other fellow has been beaten; to this, not in the least understanding the point of view, the Germans responded with bad grace. Second, there was the feeling, assiduously cultivated, that the British must make clear exactly what qualities, as contrasted with those of their late adversaries, enabled them to win the war,—this was an excellent thing for the adversaries concerned. Third, there intervened quaintly the ingrained British conviction that it is the destiny of the British race to look after other people for their welfare. This to be done with cheerful confidence, much common-sense, and without arrogance. Germans, inured to hereditary bureaucratic tyranny and military bullying, could not for a long time grasp this last manifestation. They looked at it all mistrustfully and askance. Bred to routine, they could not understand what appeared to be foolish or lazy British casualness of method. Gradually they are coming to realise the British spirit and informing idea. As they arrive at understanding, so they learn to respect.

All this, of course, was relatively easy to achieve in Cologne and the occupied Rhine area. There the brisk friendly British régime and admirable discipline are beyond praise. I think that when the history comes to be written of the reconstruction of Europe, slow and perplexing process though it be, the work of the British in the Occupied Area and of the various British Missions in Central Europe will hold high place, and many men now profoundly authoritative and respected at the scene of their often solitary labours will receive grateful recognition from their countrymen who now know very little about them. Bingham and Malcolm of Berlin, Arnold Robertson of Coblenz, Ryan of Cologne, Tallents of the Baltic—patient and wise administrators whose work will endure! I shall not

soon forget the disarming modesty with which young Stephen Tallents, British Commissioner for the Baltic Provinces, told me at Riga how on one occasion he resolved to put a stop to a bitter and devastating "side-war" in the great area over which he watches. Unaccompanied he set out in his car for the theatre of war. Regardless of personal danger, he collected leaders of both sides, and by sheer force of personality got them to agree to an immediate conference. There, in that distant and desperate region, in the parlour of a tiny cottage, Colonel Tallents sat with these men from nine in the evening till three the next morning, and finally induced them to sign an armistice then and there which developed later into a useful peace! Not to many men is it given, as to Stephen Tallents, to be able to say, at thirty-six, that practically single-handed they have delimited two national frontiers!

This is precisely the spirit of confidence and commonsense that a handful of young Britons apply to the administration of vast Sudan provinces. But the war has added to it a deeper knowledge of human nature and a broader and yet more generous outlook. Moreover, these European problems amidst mortified, turbulent, crushed, or timid peoples are infinitely complicated.

Walking that sunny morning from Danzig railway station to my hotel, I saw the British flag flying above a fine modern building. The British task in remote medieval Danzig must necessarily be far more difficult than on the Rhine. I wondered with what measure of success it was being tackled. For Danzig is one of the most *recherché* of the complicated dishes prepared by the chefs of the Peace Conference for a long-suffering Europe to assimilate. Later in this narrative we shall note others. In a Europe bewildered and too often embittered by the establishment of ethnological frontiers, Curzon lines, Polish corridors, and many small and ambitious states; by endless discussions of the self-determination of races and the problematical results of plebiscites; in the incubator-bred artificial Europe called into being by pundits who knew not Teschen, Danzig has become a free city once more. Proudly pedestalled on self-determination and Mr Wilson's Points, that strange document, the Versailles Treaty, ordains the return of Central Europe to the era of small states and little independent units. The instinctive development of humanity had long since shown that the day of the small state was done, and that of the consolidated empire or federation had come. Germany and Italy had proved it almost within the pundits' own generation; Mr Wilson might well have learned the same lesson from his own great country. Too

weak either for attack or defence, too small in resources to claim either much capital or credit, is it possible that under the economic conditions of the modern world the numerous little independent states called peremptorily into existence by the Versailles Treaty can survive?

Nor is the ethnographical frontier more than a pleasant fiction of the academic brain. So mixed are races in Central and Eastern Europe that it is impossible to delimit frontiers without injuring — sometimes very considerable—minorities and running up against countless religious prejudices and social jealousies. Even in little Lettland on the Baltic, probably the most satisfactory instance of the lot, there are towns in which the majority of the population are Jews. Poor puzzled frontier-makers! Often has the wish been expressed to me on my wanderings that the Big Three could have been haled from Paris and plumped down somewhere in this chaotic area, that they might learn that frontiers cannot be laid down by academic formulæ, percentages, plebiscites, or foot-rules!

Meanwhile we are to revert to the Middle Ages, and Danzig becomes a free city. Reversing a historic phrase, the old world is being called in to restore the balance of the new. At the back of the whole proceeding is the intention to give the new kingdom of Poland an outlet to the sea by virtue of a nondescript and very discontented piece of territory which stretches northward from Poland, splits up Prussia, and is called the Polish Corridor. At present Danzig is in a transition stage, like most things in Central Europe, and the British are still there. The Poles have lately become apprehensive of the proposed arrangement, since they have learned how grave on the one hand is the menace of Bolshevism, and, on the other, with what marvellous energy and speed Germany is pulling herself together. Against such forces they very pertinently inquire, how will Danzig be able to defend herself?

The British soldier does not worry his head about these things, but it did not take me long to discover that the influence of the British régime was just as bracing and vigorous here on the Baltic as in Cologne. The contrast between Danzig and slack, shabby Warsaw was electric. Danzig hums with health and activity; its streets are crowded, its shops and markets well stocked, its municipal gardens and buildings well looked after, its tramway service admirable. The old sturdy burgher life of the great Baltic seaport has been roused to new vigour. Wider commerce, I learned, is beginning, although the port is still empty and desolate. An evening stroll through the superb old streets of Danzig, one of the most perfectly preserved medieval cities of Europe, is

sheer delight to the lover of humanity; and in the genial depths of the Rathskeller, where hang from the ceiling the models of stately ships, one may once more eat steaks of Vistula salmon as only Danzig cooks can cook them.

At the corner of the street of the Holy Ghost and that of the Goldsmiths in the great Hansa days, doubtless British sailor apprentices met the blond Danzig beauties, and made love to them in their frank British way, in quiet squares where old brick churches are, or before all the world in the thronged street of Fair Ladies, where each house has its terrace whence stately merchants and their households greeted the passers-by. I think the British soldiers in Danzig to-day enjoy to the full the renascence of this jolly city life. Everybody respects them, and their pleasant straightforward bearing is helping to remove a thousand prejudices.

IV.

The little old woman had stood just in front of me for a weary hour in the "queue" that waited for visas in the German passport office at Danzig. She was very old, and her hair was silvery. In her eyes there lay the dumb and pathetic patience of the peasant and the Slav. Of all European races the Slav has endured most, and beneath oppression has been the most helpless. Whether bowing to the bluff tyranny of the soldier, or to the worse, because more cynical, bullying of the bureaucrat, you will see to this day in the bearing of the Slav peasantry a humble and bewildered endurance, neither stolid nor sullen, that is an age-long inheritance, and infinitely sad.

At last the interminable succession of cringing Jew merchants, voluble commercial travellers of a score of eastern European nationalities, slow-thinking peasant youths wandering vaguely through a turbulent Europe in search of work, haggard refugees struggling homewards in tragic groups, had pushed out of the arid and stuffy room. The little old woman's turn had come. She had to tell her tale to a thin pasty-faced Prussian official, snappy and supercilious. Typical of his race, with high cheek-bones, coarse lips, thick neck, and flat-backed head, he clearly exulted in his petty authority. He kept her waiting whilst he wrote, so that he might duly impress her with his importance, and her patient pleading eyes sought in vain for a hint of friendliness.

Her little story, I think, might well have won sympathy. She and her daughter lived in a tiny village a few kilometres from Danzig, but within the

area handed over by the Allies to the new Free City. Almost in the next village lived the young apothecary to whom the daughter was engaged. Unluckily this village was just across the new frontier in East Prussia, and the old woman was now seeking from bureaucracy the necessary visas to enable her and her daughter to enter German territory. Peasant-like she poured out intimate details to illuminate her request. The young fellow was most respectable and hard-working. The two were devoted to each other. In every way the match was an excellent one. The date of the wedding was fixed, and the whole village was busily engaged in preparing to welcome the bride and celebrate the event. Pride shone in the old mother's eyes. But only for a moment.

"This is quite irregular," snapped the German passport official in a thin harsh voice. "Without further evidence your request is simply preposterous. How do I know that your story isn't a mass of lies?" To any one with knowledge of human nature a glance at the old woman's steadfast face would have been assurance sufficient of her honesty; but, entrenched behind regulations, bureaucracy does not judge according to human instincts. The passport official, peering up through his eye-glasses, hinted at all kinds of elaborate and felonious conspiracies which this illiterate peasant might well be hatching, even coarsely suggesting a revolting motive for the daughter's desire to establish herself in another village. "Before I give you my permission to enter Germany," the supercilious voice went on, "you must produce a letter from this apothecary establishing his identity and corroborating your statement concerning his intended marriage with your daughter, and an official statement from the local authorities of his village duly stamped and confirming the whole matter. Rules are made to be obeyed. Government is not a matter of guess-work. Off with you." He bent to his papers. The little old woman crept silently out of the room.

It was some minutes before I could find her again, since my turn came next to confront bureaucracy. I was travelling on the following day from Danzig to Memel, and I had to obtain a visa permitting me, sitting quietly in a train, to pass through a small shred of Germany. Incidentally the cost of that visa was greater than the first-class fare for the entire railway journey of fourteen hours! In a chilly corridor placarded with posters giving complicated instructions to emigrants, refugees, returning soldiers, and others whose problems it is the task of bureaucracy to solve, I found the old peasant woman bewildered and forlorn. She crouched on a wooden bench, and tears rolled silently down her withered cheeks. What was really her poor muddled

view of her conflict with the petty bully of the passport office I could not ascertain, but it clearly loomed before her as a tragic and insuperable obstacle to her child's happiness. Although I was able somewhat to reassure her, it was evident that the little wedding would have to be postponed. I undertook to explain the crisis to the bridegroom, and at length the old woman tottered down the broad stone staircase and out into the bright Baltic sunshine to begin her weary homeward trudge.

The episode remained in my memory because it was typical of post-war Europe. I have encountered similar pitiful little episodes in a score of such arid and inhospitable passport offices between Rhine and Dwina. Everywhere in the reconstruction of Europe after the war, bureaucracy, as Roosevelt once remarked of European peace, "rages with its accustomed ferocity," but to an extent and with a tyranny never hitherto approached in European history! In comparison with the working out of the Peace Treaty and the re-establishment of intercourse between communities, the war was a simple and straightforward process! How little the Treaty-makers —ardent, light-hearted, or merely slap-dash — realised what a flood of petty officials they were letting loose upon tired and harmless peoples who wanted nothing more than to be left alone to get the world working again! Every readjustment of territory, every grandiloquent project of self-determination and ethnographical frontiers, every commercial clause, gave hundreds of delighted bureaucrats the chance of wielding a little brief authority and earning a salary for interfering in the affairs of other people! Imagine the hundreds of thousands of property claims and problems of nationality that come up for settlement when a frontier, however small, is arbitrarily adjusted! I have met a farmer who suddenly discovered that whilst his house and vegetable garden remained in the land of his fathers, his barns and pasturage had been transferred to another country with which his own was still technically at war. I know a village in which the population found itself on one side of a Peace Treaty frontier, whilst the church, the general shop, and the inn were on the other!

But of all the happy hunting-grounds of the petty official bully, the visa office affords him the greatest sport. Here he is thoroughly happy in the untrammelled exercise of his crudest instincts. In these days European travel is still very far from comfortable, and after eight consecutive months of it I frequently feel inclined to echo 'Punch's' advice to those about to be married and say: Don't. But to those informed by the spirit of adventure difficulties and discomfort bring few alarms; travel they must,

and if they will remember to carry with them food and drink, Keating's powder, soap, towels, candles, and a corkscrew, travel indeed they shall! They must, however, bear in mind that trains generally are few. In the new country of Lettland, which is larger than Denmark, Switzerland, or Belgium, there are only six locomotives left from the loot of enemies, and out of the five thousand locomotives in Soviet Russia, four thousand have been taken over by the army. Moreover, trains in Central Europe have a deplorable habit of starting at six o'clock in the morning, and they always appear to do their best not to arrive at their destination until eleven o'clock at night. There follows a mad rush into the night of travellers, rendered unscrupulous by fatigue and hunger, to swamp the nearest hotels; and he who lags in the race may very likely be forced to choose between a few hours' rest on a slippery horsehair sofa in the smoking-room, or a dismal vigil seated on his baggage in the crowded and unventilated station waiting-hall.

Yet all this is humorous and intriguing in comparison with the long-drawn-out process of getting the visas without which European travel is now impossible. To tackle this a constitution is necessary able to endure long hours of waiting in stuffy, dirty, and crowded passport offices. Temper is essential that is proof against the peevishness and impertinence of innumerable young men who write intimate remarks about one's personal appearance in heavy ledgers, and finally, for a consideration, place on one's passport an official stamp and scratch hieroglyphics round it. Also the traveller will need a fat purse. My latest collection of visas enabling me to travel for a few months, ostensibly without let or hindrance, through France, Belgium, and Germany, cost me over £7; and for the price of another set of visas necessary for a journey from Riga through Berlin to Paris I could have rented for a month in the pleasant town of Riga a spacious and comfortably-furnished flat with butler, cook, and housemaid. I had to obtain a visa to enter Lettland. Two more permitted me to sojourn there. A fourth allowed me to leave. Visas were necessary for the passage through Lithuania and the Polish Corridor, and another was required authorising me to enter Germany. On arrival in Berlin I had to obtain official permission to stay there, and before I could move on to Paris I had to buy visas permitting me to leave Germany, to pass in a train through Belgium, and to enter France. Moreover, as the Poles were busily engaged in invading Lithuania, it was quite on the cards that passenger traffic in that unlucky little country would be peremptorily interrupted. In that case I should have to make a detour through Memel. But Memel is at pres-

ent under control of the French. So yet another visa had to be bought!

It is time that this farcical and costly official parade should be abolished. Nothing works with more disastrous effect against the tranquillisation of war-weary and restless communities or the re-establishment of commerce and industry than the pompous ritual of unnecessary officialdom. It is absurd to regard this visa business as in any sense a safeguard, for at least half the scrutinisers of passports *en route* on the Continent are illiterate, and many are corrupt. Dozens of times has my passport been examined in the semi-darkness of badly-lighted trains or station buildings by shabby men, unable to read, who turn it over with a ridiculous pretence of knowingness, and never attempt to discover the particular visa which concerns them. I have known of men bluffing their way half across Europe waving baptism or share certificates and bribing tactfully.

Certainly the visa fetish of pettifogging bureaucracy brings a certain amount of ready cash to small impoverished countries and do-it-while-you-wait photographers. Moreover, passport offices practise sublime disregard of the convenience of the public, as indeed does bureaucracy generally, and, as a rule, are only open from nine to one. It therefore frequently occurs that travellers are obliged to stay for one or even two nights in towns where visas have to be picked up, and innkeepers benefit accordingly. Meanwhile thousands of business men, many of them British, are daily subjected to delays and annoyances as they travel over Europe endeavouring to open up once more the old trade routes and reconstruct the business world. The visa punctilio is a direct discouragement to tourist and, indeed, railway traffic generally, and thus every country suffers directly or indirectly. Great Britain is at present the only country which has had the common-sense to slacken off its visa restrictions. Europe will not advance far until other countries follow suit.

I recall with sinister glee, though I dare not print, the opinion of Continental obstructionist officialdom expressed by a shrewd Scots merchant whom I encountered in a Memel restaurant. He had come from Wick, and was endeavouring to link up again old connections on the Baltic seaboard in the herring trade. Everywhere he had run up against petty bureaucracy, stupid formalities, and pound-foolish punctilio. Although I had been educated at the University of Edinburgh, I do not think I had ever till then fully realised the inherent vigour, wealth, and elasticity of the Scots tongue!

(To be continued.)

A STUDY IN GREEN.

BY SALTIRE.

V. THE CACHE.

WITH the exception perhaps of the uprising in 1640, there has never been an occasion when the Irish have made serious headway against the British Government: their record of rebellions is a record of failure. The principal reason for this is their utter inability to work together in harmony: if they understood the value of concord, they would long ago have appreciated the benefits of loyal co-operation with Great Britain. And if a second reason be sought for, it is that an Irishman seldom knows his own mind. He has been aptly defined as "a man who doesn't know what he wants, and won't be happy till he gets it."

These reflections are comforting to people who live from day to day in the expectation of alarms and surprises. They are prepared for outbursts and for even bigger things; but they are confident that a body of well-disciplined and determined men are, even if numerically inferior, quite sufficient to cope with any uprising of which the Sinn Fein organisation is capable.

During the war false alarms were, in the main, the exception; during the "civil war" in Ireland they are the rule. The official reprisals, in the form of arrests of ringleaders, which followed the succession of murders, would, it was thought, be revenged by Sinn Fein enterprises on a large scale, and more than usual precautions were taken in consequence. The idea that the insurgents would endeavour to carry out carefully-planned and detailed attacks on barracks always seemed very much on a par with the German invasion of England. Both contingencies were equally unlikely. But this is not equivalent to saying that precautions against a sudden emergency should be neglected. And, at the time, the possibility of Sinn Fein embarking on some big military operation far beyond the scope of anything they had attempted before was uppermost in everybody's mind.

Whenever a sentry, after marching to and fro for a weary hour, saw a cat slinking over the top of a wall, conviction filled him that the fated moment had come. He challenged loudly, called to the other sentry, held a consultation with him in eager undertones, told the sergeant of the guard when he came round with the relief, and the next sentry told the orderly officer when he arrived on visiting

rounds; so that on the following morning the camp was full of rumours of how several Sinn Feiners had popped their heads over the wall and insulted the sentries.

Perhaps the sentry, after challenging the cat and receiving no reply, had fired off a round, and that added an additional thrill to the narrative as it circulated through the messes: an attack on the barracks had been briskly repulsed, and one severely wounded Sinn Feiner had been carried away by his comrades. Not that all these stories were idle tales, or every incident of the kind merely an affair of cats. There were certain spots in the vicinity where the rebels did lurk at night on the outlook for any negligence that might give them their opportunity.

On one especial night, when some ingenious persons had planned to break the monotony of this *vie de garnison* by giving a dance, the Sinn Fein Intelligence branch got wind of what was happening, and made up its mind to test the alertness of the defenders. It was about half-past eleven, or perhaps scarcely so late, when an orderly came hot and flustered to the door of the mess asking for the officer on duty. Being required to state his business, he announced that the picquet had been alarmed and were "standing to." Further inquiries elicited the news that several shots had been fired, unmistakably at the sentries, from trees overlooking their posts.

Now the picquet in question was placed on the slope of a piece of rough hillside which ran down to a stone wall. On the other side of the wall ran a broad belt of thick unkempt bushes, and rising out of their midst a row of tall trees, elm or lime, at intervals of about five yards. And beyond this lay a well-ordered cemetery full of big shrubs and flower-beds, with plenty of places most admirably suited to the concealment of a man with a rifle.

The duty officer, being summoned to the scene of the occurrence, went down with the orderly to reconnoitre. He found a universal expression of opinion that shots had been fired, and almost certainly from one of the trees in the cemetery; but whether they were concerned with one sniper only, or whether there were numbers of men hidden behind the bushes, was a mystery. The new moon shining above the camp made the forms of the sentries visible when the guard was changed, while among the trees on the lower slope of the hill the firer would be easily concealed.

It was decided ultimately that the best plan was to patrol the ground where the disturbers of the peace might be hid. But as secrecy was the main object, the officer decided to take only one man with himself into the cemetery, and to leave a strong reinforcement behind the wall, where

they would be ready in case of emergency.

An old soldier, Fenwick by name, though more familiarly known to his comrades as "the bull-dog," or to officers as "the sleuth," to whom this kind of thing was familiar, and who appeared delighted at the prospect of an adventure that reminded him of old times, was selected as eminently fitted for the purpose.

There were certain difficulties at the outset. The outlying region of the camp which bordered the cemetery was protected by a most inconvenient apron of barbed wire, and there appeared to be no exit through this into the ground beyond. The slightest mistake in getting through an obstacle of this kind is apt to be prejudicial to clothes, not to say hands and faces. The direct way into the cemetery, therefore, over the wire on the top of the wall and through the bushes, was abandoned in favour of a more circuitous route. This would avoid the wire and would lessen the possibility of discovery if the ground beyond the wall should be occupied.

All the members of the patrol crept through the wire six hundred yards higher up the hill, where it has only two strands instead of six, and is thus more easily negotiable, close to the great bastion which protects the inner precincts of the fort, and even then they had reason to curse the conscientious thoroughness with which the Engineers had done their work. The old bull-dog showed himself to be no respecter of persons. He was outspoken with his advice, which was nearly always sound; and there was no question that the patrol leader had been wise in his choice.

After they had advanced some distance along the side of a hedge through a dripping cornfield, they reached the angle of the wall where an overhanging tree facilitated the descent.

They had now come back almost to the point from which they had started after their preliminary conference, with this advantage, that they were on the other side of the hedge with its powerful reinforcement of barbed wire. Through it they could exchange remarks with the sentries on the camp side.

It was decided that the main body of the patrol should stay here, and that only the officer and the bull-dog should go into the cemetery.

Strict orders were given to the sergeant in charge that they were not to stir from the spot or to talk in anything but the lowest tone; and that they were to be ready for action on the whistle sounding.

As is the case with so many of these walls built upon rapid slopes, the drop on the farther side was considerable—from eighteen to twenty feet. Knowledge of this only dawned on them later after they had flopped down into a mass of ivy and rhododendron bushes,

where they waited for some time in silence, listening intently. A plan of action had now to be decided upon. To begin with, the officer had to remind the bull-dog, for the second time, that they were not to fire on any one at sight, unless it were proved to their entire satisfaction that he had arms in his hands. In other words, whether they saw their enemy first or not, he would have the first shot.

The bull-dog listened to this rather impatiently, which attitude, although not entirely correct, was perhaps excusable. And then he said—

"That's very unjust, sir."

"Yes, it does seem so, but it's an order."

"All right, sir!"

The long line of trees, already mentioned as on the farther side of the wall from the camp, stretched far away in front, and here and there the moonlight shone through the spaces between them, creating paths of brightness over the grass. That threw the rest of the scene before them into a still deeper shadow. At such times it is hard to keep the imagination in check. How many men might be lurking among those shadows? Or perhaps there was only one sniper sitting in a tree, and he had heard their fall as they stumbled into the rhododendron bushes.

After a longish interval, in which no form could be seen, no sound could be heard, they advanced stealthily along the path, sinking every few yards into the deep tangle of bushes by its side, with every sense alert to catch the slightest indication of a human presence. But as no one appeared, and there was nothing to break the silence save the occasional call of a night bird or the distant rumble of a lorry going on its rounds, their caution diminished. They ceased to advance in a crouching attitude, and walked boldly along the path. Both agreed, after holding a short council of war, that dangerous people might be hiding among the trees, and therefore they decided to patrol the complete length of the path to the end of the cemetery. The sleuth became very pleased and animated on recognising a spot where the long grass and undergrowth had been trodden down as if a man had passed, and here they waited for several minutes on the chance of hearing something moving or breathing.

The enemy might be securely seated in one of the branches on the other side of the thicket, and if his attention was closely fixed on the camp there was every reason why he should be quite ignorant of their approach. For the ground was soft, their footsteps made hardly any sound, and the thicket was dense enough to hide them completely.

They walked along the path bordering the wall, peeped everywhere, looked up into the trees on the chance of seeing a man or some part of one betrayed by the moon,

which could now be clearly seen between the upper branches. But they reached the end of the path and still found nothing. Beyond was a wicket in a palisade leading into what appeared to be a farmyard, if they could judge by the low grunting of pigs heard in the distance.

Said the old soldier, "I've been in Ireland nine months, sir, and I've some experience of this work; and I can say with certainty, this is the most dangerous place in the neighbourhood. Down there's the Sinn Fein headquarters," and he pointed through the trees to where some lights twinkled in a couple of cottages nine hundred yards or so away in the valley. "You can see them drilling here of an evening any time you care to look out from the top of the 'ill just before dark. And this," he said, with profound emphasis, "this is from where they spies on us."

The realisation of the truth of this announcement did not deter him, however, once made fairly certain that there was no rebel in the place where he had expected to find one, from proposing that they should walk through the gate to another gate leading into the road, and then walk down the road and clamber into the camp by a different entrance to the one by which the patrol had gone out: this at imminent risk to their clothes and persons from the wire, and to their lives from the sentries, who were unaware either of the existence of any patrol or of its password, and who would most likely have shot at sight.

These suggestions certainly proved the sleuth a daring man, not to say a reckless. His zeal was obviously getting the better of him. All this was with the hope of bagging a Sinn Feiner red-handed, his chief ambition in life as he afterwards explained. Wiser counsels, however, prevailed; the sleuth was made to understand that the object of the patrol was to ascertain that there was no force of Sinn Feiners in the cemetery waiting to spring a surprise on the camp, and that the patrol would confine themselves to that object.

They moved, then, on to the lower slopes, where patches of moonlight alternated with broad regions of shade beneath clumps of yew and cypress. They waited behind an avenue of these dark trees, and then crossed a path, one at a time, with precaution. It was difficult for them to believe as they moved out into the moonlight that the details of their clothing and the features of their faces were not visible from every point of vantage in the neighbourhood; but then the memory of their former experiences at this same trade came to their assistance, and they reflected that just as a tree or a shrub can look exactly like a man under the moon, so a man moving forward spasmodically and crouching as

still as death after his spring, can easily be mistaken for a branch shaken in the wind.

All at once the officer felt a sudden violent tug at the sleeve of his tunic. Acting as by second nature, he dropped and lay still. The sleuth was lying beside him, every sense on the alert. He was one to rely on in a situation of this kind, and the only fear was that excitement might gain too great a mastery over him. He had marvellous eyes that man; he could see in the sombre light like a cat.

Fifty yards ahead of them there was something moving. The sleuth pointed cautiously in the direction. There were two small beds of shrubs just before them, and a little to the left some twenty yards beyond these a line of yew-trees. And there, just beneath them, something moved. No, it could not be a branch of a tree,—it was a man. He was bending backwards and forwards, and when he came forwards the moonlight fell on him, and when he went backwards he vanished for a moment. And they lay there watching him.

"Looks as if he was doing physical exercises, it do, sir," said the sleuth in the lowest undertone, recovering slightly from his astonishment.

The sleuth drew up his rifle into position, the officer grasped his revolver more firmly. Then "Steady there," whispered the officer; "not yet."

"That's one of them blackguards," went on the old soldier in the same voice, so deep and low that it could not be heard a yard away from the ear it was intended for. "I don't know what he's up to, sir, but depend upon it he's not out here at this time o' night for any good."

For a moment the officer wondered whether it might not be advisable to crawl back and collect the rest of the patrol; but he abandoned this idea on reflecting that surprise is the all-important element on occasions of this kind. He thought of the rattle their tin hats would make as they came up, and that they would probably talk as well as clank their rifles. No, this was an affair where stealth and secrecy were essential, and at least he had a thoroughly sound man with him on whom he could rely absolutely in a tight corner.

"Fenwick, you creep along to the left here under cover of these two thick bushes. I will get round to the right. In ten minutes or less I'll be lying under that small tree five yards from the farther side of the path. You see the tree I mean."

"Yes, sir."

"And you will be behind that tree on this side the path. There!" He pointed: there was no mistaking it. It stood alone, affording just the necessary space to conceal a man.

"Yes, sir."

"And you will not move or utter a sound until you hear me speak. Then you may come forward."

"Yes, sir."

And then they parted.

It was a chancy business crawling through the grass and wondering whether the solitary figure had any accomplices, whether he was an outpost in a big scheme, or a dupe of Sinn Fein terrorism placed there as a spy, or merely—the least probable hypothesis, considering the circumstances—a harmless idiot.

For he might quite well be any of these things.

The sleuth had the best concealed approach of the two. Once as he moved along he thought he could hear the rustle of branches as the officer rolled into the projecting foliage of a shrub. Then there was an unearthly silence, in which the piercing hoot of an owl, suddenly rising out of one of the trees close by, made them start and their hearts beat faster, for during an instant to their strained senses it seemed like a human voice.

They were each of them within ten paces of the man now, and just then he came out into the moonlight. He stood still for a moment and seemed to be listening. His clothes were veritable rags, while his features were almost entirely hidden by a broad-brimmed slouch hat pulled well down over his eyes.

Then he went back into the shadow and picked up something—a rifle, not a doubt of it; caught red-handed this time with arms in his hands. No! great heavens, a spade, and then the singular motion they had noticed before, bowing himself to and fro. He was digging.

"Who are you, and what are you doing?"

The man jumped as if he had been shot.

"Augh!" He looked wildly round him like a savage animal suddenly surprised in its lair. Then peering in the direction of the voice, and seeing, as he thought, only one man approaching him—

"Augh!" said he, "it's the dread was fillin' me when I heerd yer voice so sudden like"; and then looking straight at the officer and with more assurance, "sure," he went on, "an' I'm afther diggin' a grave for Michael O'Flanigan, and if I'm annyway fortunate it's in it by midday to-morrow he'll be."

"And if we're anyway fortunate," said the sleuth, suddenly appearing out of the darkness, and acquiring in the excitement of the moment a spice of irony with which he had never before been credited, "it's in it by ten minutes from now ye'll be. There he stands, sir," he continued, becoming all at once an orator in spite of himself, "the blackguard! I know the appearance of 'im. He's one of the brutes that shoots our men on the roads by surprises, and always 'ave some plausible reason to account for themselves when they're caught. 'E's one of

the brutes what's responsible for keeping us poor fellows out of our beds till three in the morning. There 'e be," and the sleuth's voice, at first under control, grew louder and louder, "a traitor to 'is King and country, as sure as we're standing 'ere. And then we arrests 'im, and 'e goes up to a court-martial; and they says they can't convict because they ain't got no evidence. And then, if they does convict, the Governmint lets 'im go agin. If I 'ad my way, there wouldn't be no Governmint. We'd 'ave nothing but military law. And what should a loyal subject be doing in this 'ere place digging a grave at midnight, when all loyal subjects except ourselves, sir, is in bed?"

And having hitherto glared steadily at the offender, now thoroughly alarmed, as well he might be, he turned at this point to the officer as if seeking confirmation for his sentiments.

The grave-digger, thoroughly startled by the apparition of a third party and this tremendous torrent of language, in which he realised only the naked truth, began to shiver all over.

"I'm an honest man, sir," he protested. "I'm as loyal a subject as ever lived; and who should he be but an infamous libeller, puttin' crime on a poor man that asks nothin' more than for to be allowed to work quietly and decently for his livin'."

"Well, keep still," said the officer; "put down the spade and put up your hands. We shall have to search you."

The spade went down, the quivering hands went up, transforming this strange denizen of the night into the likeness of a frightened bird. They searched his clothes, his hat, his pockets, and the ground all round him; but they found no arms, only several papers which the officer carefully removed to his own pockets for future investigation. Then they marched him off between the two of them.

The grave-digger, seeing his chance directly silence was restored, began talking. It was quite impossible to hear most of what he said, but his two chief claims to consideration when every other argument proved useless were that his wife's cousin had been a sergeant in the Munsters, and he himself as a boy had been under-gardener to the Earl of Tipperary.

There was considerable difficulty in getting over the wall, the grave-digger complaining piteously of rheumatism; but here the sleuth's herculean strength stood them in good stead, and after he had heaved up the recalcitrant Hibernian into the branches of the stoutest of the rhododendrons, the arms of the remainder of the patrol, who had been waiting patiently during the course of these events, succeeded in completing what was necessary.

They passed through the

cornfield again, bearing their captive with them; and as they went through the postern gate, a familiar voice called out to the officer, "Hullo! Sunshine, what's all this excitement about? Have the Sinn Feiners really been attacking the barracks?"

"No," answered he who had been addressed as Sunshine, "only digging graves."

"Digging graves, eh?"

The patrol party had halted a little in rear of the two speakers. Just above them a lamp was shining. The two formed a strange contrast—the one in his dress uniform, having only a few minutes earlier left the ballroom, and the other covered with mud and grass, his face almost hidden in a woolly cap-comforter which he wore in brazen defiance of standing regulations.

They took their prize into the inner precincts of the guardroom. There his huge floppy hat was removed, his hair brushed off his face.

"How old would you have taken this fellow to be?" said the Intelligence Officer, for it was none other than that eminent personage.

"Oh, about fifty, I suppose, or perhaps sixty."

"Unless I'm very seriously mistaken, he was twenty-seven last March," continued he of the Intelligence, "and I have his full description and antecedents very neatly indexed inside a couple of good strong Burmah locks. And very soon, I hope, I shall be able to congratulate you on having been the means of securing one of the most dangerous men in the south of Ireland."

"Don't congratulate me. Sergeant of the guard! tell Fenwick to come here."

An enormous figure of savage aspect loomed in the doorway. A broad smile spread over the Intelligence Officer's face.

"What! that old ruffian. Why, it was only last week that he was up for a District Court-martial. And only the week before," and here he beamed on Fenwick as if welcoming a long-lost friend, "that he helped me out of one of the tightest corners I ever remember in the whole course of a long and checkered career."

They heard the rasping of a heavy bolt as one of the leading lights of the "inner circle" of Sinn Fein passed into a cell that was reserved for the special convenience of great offenders.

"Fenwick," said the patrol officer, "go off and get some hot cocoa and something to eat. Sergeant of the guard! send somebody for the cook, and if he's asleep, tell them to wake him up." Then, turning to Fenwick, "Many thanks," said he, almost with feeling.

Directly Fenwick had gone, the Intelligence Officer turned to the weary man in the cap-comforter.

"Come along with me, and I think we can put the cap on this little business."

"Come along with you! What for? I'm off to bed.

As it is, I shall only get about three hours' sleep."

"I can show you something that'll make up for the loss of a night's rest."

And the upshot of it was that within three minutes they were returning with four of the patrol to the scene of the night's adventure.

The Intelligence Officer turned round just as they were starting, and asked what had been done with the spade. It was with the sergeant of the guard. "Bring it along then," said he.

On the way he asked the patrol officer several questions.

"You say you searched the ground all round where the man was standing?"

"Yes."

"And you found nothing?"

"No, only the spade."

"And how deep do you think the grave was?"

"I should say about a foot, or perhaps a foot and a half."

The Intelligence Officer took the spade himself and dug away at "Michael O'Flanigan's grave" like a Trojan. After ten minutes of this, the spade struck something hard which sounded with a metallic clang.

"Here's your evidence," said he. "Never fear; there's something in this box which will provide our friend the grave-digger with a safe passport to Rooks' Castle before many days are over. Send back two of the men for three more spades. We can work in shifts."

They lifted the first box out, then another, then a third.

"What a splendid place to keep your munitions in," said the Intelligence Officer—"a graveyard. The Sinn Feiners aren't quite such fools as they're painted, are they?"

In all, they discovered one hundred and fifty rifles of varying patterns and in very varying condition, several thousand rounds of ammunition, and a nice little supply of bombs.

And just as the dawn was breaking they went off to a well-earned sleep. He of the spade and the slouch hat spent a week as a guest at Rooks' Castle, and he then embarked on a journey across water.

. . . . . .

A fortnight later there stood on the upper deck of a steamer, looking out over the taffrail, a solitary figure gazing at the waves glittering cold in the moonlight.

As the coast receded in the distance, and the twinkle of a distant lighthouse showed the English shore, his mind was filled almost with regret to be leaving a land of so many strange things. But not quite: no one is sorry to be going home again.

And then a crowd of reflections flooded his thoughts, as they will on such occasions, when movement and change of scene and variety of experience stir the brain.

Is there a law of treason? Should men co-operate towards a common aim? Should they

help rather than hinder each other?

And as to our sense of the past: which is best, that it should be a sense of grievances carefully cherished, or a memory of mistakes and pitfalls to be avoided in the future?

Is it best to stand in the way of the body politic, and when convicted, to seek escape by an unworthy appeal to garish sentiment? For ought any ruler worthy of the name to forbear to enforce plain justice in answer to a sentimental outcry?

Has any civilisation that ignored the necessity of order continued to flourish? For this is and still remains the basis of peace and concord, as it was in the day of him who wrote—

"Sì che come noi siam di soglia in soglia
Per questo regno, a tutto 'l regno piace,
Com' allo Re, ch' in suo voler ne 'nvoglia:
E la sua volontade è nostra pace:
Ella è quel mare, al qual tutto si muove
Ciò, ch' ella cria, o che natura face."
—DANTE, 'Paradiso,' Canto iii. l. 82.

(To be continued.)

FROM THE CONGO TO UGANDA.

BY GILBERT BUSSEY.

I. THE CONGO RIVER.

WHEN Stanley made his memorable journey down the Congo in 1877, Central Equatorial Africa was in a very different condition from that which the traveller finds to-day. The great river then flowed through lands still darkened by the hideous cloud of the slave trade. Civilisation was unknown, and cannibalism was almost universal among the many warring tribes. Stanley thought it necessary to take with him a small army of negro warriors, and he had to fight almost every step of his way to the coastal regions.

Having lately crossed the Continent from the Belgian Congo to British East Africa, I am able to testify to the extraordinary change that has come over the Equatorial regions through which I passed. A fleet of steamers plies up and down the Congo river. Trading centres, missionary stations, and administrative posts are distributed all along its length. The natives, generally speaking, have been transformed from bloodthirsty cannibals into decent law-abiding members of society.

True, in the interior of the vast forests there are still black spots where human flesh is eaten at tribal feasts, and where a white man runs the risk of being received with a cloud of poisoned arrows. But these places are receiving the attention of the Belgian military authorities. Government posts are being established in the less accessible districts, and in a very short time the last remnants of the bad old days will probably have disappeared. The epoch of the alleged "red rubber" atrocities has passed away. The treatment of the natives by the Belgians I found to be excellent in the areas through which I passed, erring, if at all, on the side of leniency rather than of severity. Moreover, such are the transport facilities now available, that the greater part of the journey from west to east is rather in the nature of a pleasure trip than of the arduous and perilous undertaking of even a few years ago. The only really trying portion of the route followed was that we had to traverse on foot from Bambili—which is far away to the north-east of Stanleyville—to Kasenge on Lake Albert Nyanza, a distance of about 300 miles as the crow flies, but of nearer 400 miles by the route we took. The only district reported as dangerous owing to the un-

settled state of the natives was one near Kilo, but, by slightly altering our route, we avoided all difficulty.

The object of the expedition in which I took part was mainly big-game hunting. There were four of us: Mr Sydney Fairbairn of the Grenadier Guards, Captain Geoffrey Catchpole, Major Bisshopp, and myself. All had served in the Great War. Captain Catchpole is well known for his hunting exploits in British East Africa. Major Bisshopp and myself had had big-game experience in Rhodesia, and I had also done some shooting both in what was formerly German East Africa and to the south of the Rovuma. We travelled by Belgian steamer from Falmouth to Matadi, some few miles up the Congo, and thence by train to Kinshara, on Stanley Pool. Here we boarded the river steamer for Stanleyville, which is about 1000 miles up-stream. From Stanleyville we returned some 200 miles by a smaller boat to Bumba. A still smaller steamer took us up the Rubi river to Go. From Go we went by canoe to Jumba, thence by another steamer to Buta, and by motor-car to Bambili. Then came the long journey on foot through Poko, Rungu, Gombari (where two of our party left us to proceed by another route), Arebi, Kilo, and Runia to Kasenye, at the south-western end of Lake Albert Nyanza. Captain Catchpole and I crossed that lake by the steamer to Butiaba in Northern Uganda. We proceeded by motor-car to Masindi Port on Lake Kiogo, crossed by steamer to Namasagali, went by the short railway to Jinga on Lake Victoria Nyanza, took the steamer to Kisumu in British East Africa, and the Mombasa Railway to Nairobi.

Leaving Falmouth on the first of October 1919, we reached Matadi some three weeks later, Stanleyville in the third week of November, and, departing from Bumba at the beginning of December, completed our journey to Nairobi early in April 1920.

Matadi, the port at which we disembarked, is a curious little place built on a steep hill. The gradients are of such a character that no vehicles can be used in the streets, and everything has to be carried by natives. One's general impression of the town is summed up in the word "oil." The whole place reeks of palm-oil. Eighty per cent of the cooking is done with it; and the inhabitants, as they clamber up and down under the hot sun, look as if they had been bathing in it. The temperature was something extraordinary in the shade, and our butter came to table in the form of oil. Personally, I had such a sickening of oil that I don't think I shall ever want to taste it again even with my salad.

We had an absolute nightmare of a time with the Belgian customs officials. They

insisted that we should only take one rifle apiece, the usual equipment for big-game hunters being at least two—a heavy and a light one. The duty on the four rifles the party was allowed to retain came to over £20, while the tariff on kit and ammunition was proportionately high. The rifles we were permitted to take were disfigured by having numbers and Belgian coats-of-arms stamped on them with punches—a most objectionable proceeding. However, I am glad to remember that we managed to see the humorous side of the matter, and we all kept merry and bright in spite of the annoyances inflicted on us. We had, however, plenty to do in the way of buying stores, and so on, to occupy our minds.

We went by train to Kinshara—a nice little town at the lower end of Stanley Pool, and not far from Leopoldville. It is the port from which all the river boats start. It seems to me that in the matter of climate the Congo is the "dog with a bad name." We were surprised to find there a temperature of only about 85 degrees in the shade, and we were told the thermometer seldom rises above 90. We embarked on the steamer *Leverville*, and crossed the equator on 9th November at Coquilhatville, the greatest heat we experienced on the Congo up to that time being about 84 degrees. The passage up the river is fairly comfortable. The "chop" (food) is excellent, and passengers have a beautifully restful time. They spend the day in easy-chairs on deck, occasionally varying the monotony by a little shot-gun shooting at duck and other wildfowl. We found that Lever Brothers (the Port Sunlight people) have great interests in the Congo, whence they obtain enormous quantities of palm-oil. Their posts are scattered through the forests of the Congo basin, and the oil trade seems to be all in their hands.

The river scenery is attractive, though there is very little variety. Dense tropical forests cover the banks, except in places where there are clearings around native villages or European posts. The river is a rich chocolate colour, and the vegetation at its edge a vivid green. The huge towering trees, the thick-matted undergrowth, the many rope-like creeping plants hanging in natural festoons, are all reflected in the reddish-brown water with mirror-like clearness. Here a group of stately palms, there a clump of graceful tree-ferns, add their wild beauty to the view. Life is added to the scene by birds of brilliant plumage and the gorgeously coloured butterflies which flit about among the foliage. Hippopotami are numerous. They like to keep in the shallow water around the numerous islands, but are occasionally seen from the boat. Crocodiles are present in large numbers, and frequently offered us tar-

gets for our rifles. The "croc" is the one African animal regarding which nobody has any idea of sportsmanship. Its cold-blooded cruelty and cunning are thought to make it fair game at all times.

The river has many sandbanks, which are constantly changing their positions, and it is therefore necessary to tie the steamers up every night. This allows the passengers to stretch their legs, and provides a very welcome change from the easy-chair life on board.

We heard reports of the presence of herds of elephant and buffalo along the river, but though we seized every possibility of tracking them, we saw nothing of them. When finally we reached Stanleyville, after a voyage of about 1000 miles, we found that it had grown into a pretty little town, with avenues of palms in the main streets. We stopped with Messrs Lever Brothers' representative, who made us very comfortable. There is no hotel in the place.

Our intention had been to proceed on foot from Stanleyville to Buta, taking what is called the Nelle route, but we found it impossible to get the carriers we needed. Some of those recommended by Levers' agent did not seem to care to go as far as Buta. Others said: "We don't mind coming with you, but we don't want to carry loads." They evidently took us for philanthropists who were arranging a trip for the pleasure of shooting game to provide them with meat. A third section said: "Oh, we are very good hunters and can shoot well." These apparently thought we had travelled so far to watch a band of natives shoot. On the whole they were a very poor lot of niggers, and we decided to go back to Bumba by boat, and to reach Buta by way of the Rubi river. The Governor of Stanleyville advised us to go that way, which, he said, would take us through the best game country in the Congo State. He seemed pleased that British sportsmen should visit the Congo, and said he would like to see more of them. He gave our spokesman, Fairbairn, letters to all the "chefs de région," instructing them to assist us in every way, and he also gave permission to shoot twelve elephants and to capture okapi, if we were fortunate enough to come across any.

Accordingly, we turned in our tracks and sailed down to Bumba, 200 miles back. From Bumba it is proposed by the Belgian Government to make a railway eastward to Aba, the nearest point in the Belgian Congo to Gondokoro, on the Bahr-el-Jebel. But there are no signs of the railway yet, and we went from Bumba in a small steamer up the Rubi to Go, about 100 miles eastward. Here we got a canoe to take us farther up the stream to Jumba. The canoe voyage we found very tiring. Among its features

were the attacks of a kind of fly, whose bites cause no immediate pain, but have troublesome after-effects. From each bite a small drop of blood oozes. The unsuspecting victim, who may be reading a book, looks down to find his bare arms—for, of course, in this climate one wears no coat and has one's shirt sleeves tucked up to the elbow—and any other exposed portion of his anatomy covered with blood. In a few hours each wound has produced a fair-sized pimple, which itches intensely and lasts for two or three days.

The Congo canoes are all dug-outs—that is to say, they are each hollowed from the trunk of a single tree. Some of them are capable of carrying a load of ten tons, and are manned by about sixty paddlers. Many of them have their hulls nicely carved. These big canoes are perfectly stable, and the white passenger, if he can only forget the flies, can make himself fairly comfortable in a deck-chair under the small grass roof which the natives construct to shelter him from the blazing sun.

From Jumba we voyaged by steamer to Buta, which is about 160 miles north-east of Bumba. The river is very shallow and the steamer small. As there was only one cabin, a small flat-bottomed steel boat with a corrugated-iron roof was chained to the side of the steamer to form a second cabin for two. It looked like a dog-kennel, and as such we immediately christened it. It was a most unpleasant contrivance. Every time one moved too rapidly towards its bow it immediately dipped its nose into the river, and torrents of water came rushing in. In the three days' journey we were flooded out several times in this manner.

Buta is the town from which the only okapi ever sent to Europe was despatched in 1919. It was caught by natives and given to the wife of the Commissionaire de District. For a good many months it roamed at will about the streets of Buta, feeding in the central square and occasionally getting chased out of the officials' gardens. When it was decided to send it home, the citizens of Buta were very much surprised to learn the great value of the animal that they had been treating with so little respect. For Zoo purposes the okapi is said to be almost priceless.

The motor road from Buta to Bambili—a distance of 108 miles—is really excellent. It is constructed through a thickly populated district, and the natives never get tired of watching the passage of the car. The whole journey is a sort of triumphal procession. The inhabitants of the villages turn out in full force, cheering and dancing as the car whizzes by. The bolder spirits among the juveniles delight in running alongside the road in a vain endeavour to equal the speed of the car. The contrast be-

tween these primitive people and this product of our intricate civilisation, which takes the white man through their country, strikes one very forcibly.

II. THROUGH THE GREAT FOREST.

From Bambili we started on our march through the great forest to Lake Albert. We experienced no difficulty in obtaining the eighty odd carriers we required, and left Bambili in good spirits, very pleased to have finished for a time with mechanical transport.

I had read of the gloom of the Central African forest. I did not find it gloomy. To me it is really a delightful place in which to travel. It is a land of cool green shadows. The mighty trees are decked with graceful festoons of creepers, many of which are covered with richly-scented flowers. Round the bases of the trees is a dense undergrowth, which renders movement through the forest very difficult except on the paths. The various shades of green, blending into each other, with splashes of sunlight here and there filtering through, create a most wonderful effect.

The natives between Bambili and Poko are of the Azandi tribe. They are a very fine race. In the old days they were the best fighters in the Congo. They were, in fact, the only tribe who maintained their independence against the Arab slave-raiders. Nowadays they have directed their energies to the hunting of elephants, in which they are very successful. In the Congo natives are apparently allowed to kill an unlimited number of elephants. The custom in this district is that all ivory from animals killed by the tribal hunter is the property of the chief. In consequence, Manzali, the chief at Bambili, is a very rich man, and has for sale every year several tons of ivory.

In the vicinity of Poko the character of the country changes from forest to ranges of hills covered with tall grass, and carrying very little timber. The natives take full advantage of the masses of almost pure iron which cap many of the hills, and blacksmiths' forges are numerous. The ore is smelted with charcoal, and the resulting iron is hammered into a great variety of excellent knives, spears, and swords.

The inhabitants of this area are of the Mangbeti race. They have a curious and rather barbarous custom of binding thin strips of bark tightly round the heads of their infants. This binding is left on for several years, with the result that the skull grows long, thin, and egg-shaped. Skulls of eighteen inches from the forehead to the back of the head are not uncommon.

This grass country contains water-buck, a kind of kob,

and also buffalo, but until the grass has been burnt off hunting is practically impossible.

Between Poko and Rungu the path crosses the Bomakandi river at Teli. This is a really delightful spot. The local chief has built a fine brick house for his European visitors. All the natives appeared to be delighted to see us, and treated us with great hospitality. Captain Catchpole secured our first head of big game here by shooting a hippopotamus. There were about a dozen of these animals in a large pool a short distance up the river. Catchpole and I canoed up to them at daybreak on the morning after our arrival. We found them in the centre of the pool, huddled together with their heads out of the water.

We landed and crept through the forest until we were opposite to them, and then descended to the edge of the river, sinking up to our knees in thick black mud. Catchpole took the shot, but he had great difficulty in picking out an individual head. The hippo were so close together that they looked like a compact mass, with here a pink ear showing up and there a little piggy eye gazing stolidly into vacancy. He managed, nevertheless, to kill a cow.

The effect of the shot was electrical. With a mighty splashing and lashing up of foam the whole herd dived and scattered. We spent the next hour in trying to get snap-shots at heads bobbing up and down all over the pool. The beasts were thoroughly frightened, however, and refrained from putting much more than their noses above water, and even then only remaining up for a couple of seconds. We therefore had to content ourselves with the one already shot, which was by now floating. We arranged with some canoe boys to tow the carcass down to Teli, and we ourselves returned to camp.

Buffalo were reported here along the Bomakandi. We found on investigation that, although they had been there a few weeks previously, recent grass fires had driven them away to other feeding-grounds.

At Rungu the road again crosses the Bomakandi, and it is here that we first began to get into really good elephant country.

We camped three days beyond Rungu, at the village of a chief whose banana plantations were visited by the great thieves almost every night.

After some pretty strenuous hunting one of our party managed to account for two bull elephants. One of them bore a terrible wound inflicted by a native falling-spear trap. The front of his trunk had been sliced off from the base almost to the tip, leaving the two interior flanges quite open. The lower portion of the wound had healed, but between the eyes there was still a large hole which was in a horrible condition. The poor beast

must have been in frightful pain, and the bullet which killed him certainly afforded him a merciful release.

These native traps are fearsome contrivances. In parts they are numerous, and make hunting in the forest without a local guide extremely dangerous. They are placed on elephant paths, and woe betide the unfortunate individual who unwittingly walks under one of them. The shaft of the "spear" consists of the trunk of a tree six inches in diameter and fifteen feet long. In the end of this is securely fastened a tough stick about two feet in length and tipped with a sharp knife shaped like a cheese-cutter. The spear is suspended from the branch of a tree overhanging the selected elephant path, at a height of at least twenty feet. The cord by which it hangs runs down to the ground, and is fixed by an ingenious catch in such a manner that any animal or person passing along the path is bound to touch it. This causes the spear to drop, and its great weight drives it with immense force into the unfortunate creature who has sprung the trap. We heard of a native woman in this district who was killed in this manner, and we were informed that the knife had struck her in the centre of the head with such tremendous power that it had almost cleft her in two.

Apart from the danger of traps, elephant-hunting in the forest is an extremely arduous and risky undertaking. It is often necessary to follow a trail continuously for many hours. When the elephant is eventually located, the undergrowth is usually so thick that it is necessary to approach within half a dozen yards of him before an accurate shot can be obtained. In the event of the elephant being one of a herd, there is also the danger of an unwounded elephant trampling on the hunter in the blind stampede which follows the report of the gun.

The Congo native's idea of distance seems to be very vague. When asked how far a certain village is, he invariably replies that the path crosses so many rivers. He does not seem to realise that the distance between rivers occasionally varies. Even on the point of the number of rivers he is often inaccurate, and when one is hot and tired and has crossed the reported number, and is then told that there are still two or three more on the road, one is apt to criticise the guide in rather unparliamentary language.

After the hunt on the Rungu road we decided to split up into two parties, with the idea of increasing our chances of bagging some big game. The rest of the party went on along the Gombari road to hunt on the east of the Duru river, and I struck south into the Ituri forest.

I made my hunting camp on the Andudu road at the village of a chief named Manda. I

found there the Belgian Judge from Wamba on circuit. He treated me with great courtesy, and gave me some very interesting information about the Ituri pygmies. He has spent a number of years in the district, and has studied the pygmies and their customs with great interest. He informed me that the true pygmy is even now beginning to die out. Intermarriage with other tribes and settlement into permanent villages have already increased the height of numbers of the present generation. The average pygmy is no longer the shy elusive creature that he was formerly. In the dense forest along the upper Ituri, however, the real old-fashioned pygmies still exist. They are a race of wanderers, and live by hunting. White men penetrating into this region are received with suspicion, but not with hostility.

The pygmy kills his elephant solely with knives and spears. His usual method of procedure is to creep up behind a sleeping elephant, and with one stroke of his heavy razor-like knife, cut the tendons of one of the animal's hind-legs. As an elephant cannot move on three legs, he is then at the hunter's mercy, and can be despatched at leisure with spears.

The pygmies are very honest in their dealings with neighbouring tribes. If a bunch of bananas is required, a hunter will go into a banana plantation at night, cut his bunch, and hang a piece of meat on the tree in payment.

I found a fair amount of game around Manda's, and managed to bag several buffaloes, &c. There were large numbers in the vicinity. When I joined the other party I found that they had accounted for a couple of elephants and a good many buffaloes.

III. NARROW ESCAPES.

There are two exciting incidents to place on record in connection with our stay in this district. One has to do with an elephant, the other with a buffalo. One member of the party, whose modesty I shall not shock if I call him A., badly wounded a large bull elephant in the shoulder. The shot was, however, too low for the heart, and did not seem to have any immediate effect on the animal. He went crashing away through the forest, apparently with unimpaired vigour. A. followed him as quickly as possible, and soon came up with him. He was standing in a very thick patch of undergrowth, and charged A. immediately he sighted him. A. turned him without difficulty with the first barrel of his ·475, and fired the second barrel into his shoulder as he swerved off to the right. He seemed now to be very sick

indeed, and could only trot very slowly. A. ran after him, every now and again catching a glimpse of his huge hind-quarters and putting a snap-shot into them in the hope of breaking the spine and bringing him down. After the fourth unsuccessful shot the elephant turned and charged again, this time with great determination. A. fired both barrels into the chest without stopping him, and had then just time to dash to one side, and avoid his waving trunk by a margin which was, he says, too narrow to be pleasant.

After this outburst of rage the poor brute seemed to lose heart, and having retreated a hundred yards or so, stood in a comparatively open spot hanging his head and breathing in great sobbing gasps. A. crept up and put an end to his misery by sending a bullet through his brain.

The hero of the buffalo story was Captain Catchpole. Having wounded one in the forest, he was following the animal in very thick undergrowth, when it charged him, without warning, from a distance of about twelve yards. He could not see it, but heard it crashing towards him, and fired blindly at three yards' range. Fortunately his bullet penetrated its brain and dropped it.

Catchpole was accompanied by a local native, who was carrying a small bow, with arrows about a foot in length. On examining the dead bull, Catchpole was amused to find one of these arrows sticking about half an inch into its hide. It appears that the native had discharged it at almost the same moment that Catchpole fired. We concluded that this native was an optimist, and that he was acting on the principle that "every little helps." The buffalo in this district seem to be a cross between the red and the black. In the same herd animals of both colours may be seen, and the horns differ very much, sometimes resembling the one type and sometimes the other.

The natives in this district have a cruel method of killing elephants, though it is now illegal, and punishable by very severe penalties. It is that of "burning" them. The forest here is broken up by patches of elephant-grass, often many hundreds of acres in extent. This grass is about fourteen feet high. It is coarse, and grows so close together that it constitutes a perfect thicket. It is a favourite resort of the elephants, which often go into it to sleep during the day. At the end of the dry season it gets like tinder, and a fire lighted on the windward side rushes across the whole area with great rapidity.

The natives, having decided on a hunt, assemble in large numbers, and camp in the vicinity of one of these grass patches which they know is frequented by a herd of elephants. When the herd has been marked down in the interior of the grass, a cordon

of natives is formed all round the patch, and the grass is fired simultaneously on all sides.

The elephants are now enclosed in a ring of fire which rapidly approaches them. This terrifies the poor beasts to such an extent that, instead of making a dash for it, they stand huddled up together in the centre of the patch, too frightened to move. The majority of them are eventually suffocated by the clouds of dense smoke, and the few who do venture to rush through the flames are met with a volley of bullets from the native muzzle-loaders, and clouds of spears and arrows. It is very rarely that more than one or two escape, and in this way whole herds—bulls, cows, and calves—are completely wiped out.

At Gombari we again split our force, Catchpole and I deciding to push on to Nairobi, and the other two turning north-eastward to Dungu and Faradje.

We slept at a chief's village on the Arebi road. One of the treasures of this village is an enormous drum. It is constructed, as are all these signalling-drums, out of a single piece of wood, and is ornamented with an excellent carving of an antelope's head. It weighs at least half a ton, and the chief informed me that he could send direct messages with it for a distance of twenty miles.

This method of signalling by drum-taps is universal in the Nelle and Ituri districts. The drum is made in such a manner that a stroke on one side gives a high note, and a stroke on the other a low note. This enables a drummer to send quite elaborate messages. For instance, a series of four strokes alternately on the high and low sides mean that carriers are required. Very rapid single alternate strokes mean that the message is urgent and requires immediate attention. Other combinations of high and low notes convey such messages as a general invitation to drink beer, enemy invading territory, a death, white men arriving, &c. An important message will be drummed in an extraordinarily short time from one end of the country to the other.

At this village we also saw one of the large curved knives which were formerly used for "message-sending." The method of sending a message by the knife was as follows. A messenger was selected, and the message to be conveyed was constantly repeated to him until he could recite it word for word. He was then bound down to the ground. A small springy sapling was bent and attached to the curved knife, which was placed under his neck. When all was ready the sapling was released, and the unfortunate fellow's head was severed and thrown into the air. His spirit was then supposed to hurry off and deliver the message without

any delay. As his remains probably provided the roast for that evening's dinner, there was doubtless a big demand for messengers in times of meat shortage.

On our arrival at Arebi we were informed by the Belgian official that the natives on the Kilo road were in an unsettled state. He at first refused to obtain carriers for us, on the ground that, if we persisted in pushing through, both we and the carriers would be killed. After a deal of argument he eventually provided the carriers, on the understanding that we would avoid the main path, and that he would not be held responsible for our deaths.

We accordingly kept well to the east of the Kilo road, and passed through without encountering any natives in the least inclined to be hostile. A day's march from Arebi we got out of the forest into rolling granite hills, very similar in climate and appearance to the granite country of Southern Rhodesia. In places the grass on these hills is short and sweet, and provides grazing for large herds of buffalo.

The elephants here are quite unlike the forest type, having differently-shaped ears, and very short, thick, curved tusks. They are known by the natives as "tembo-yo-mjani"—that is, grass-elephants. They seem much bolder than their forest brothers, appearing in the open country before dark, and taking very little notice of intruding human beings. During the heat of the day they retire into the thickets which border all the streams.

We shot a good many buffalo on the road, besides other game. The buffalo seem, in this district, to be the link between the red and the black types. In some cases one finds animals of all shades, from red to black, running in the same herd. As a rule, the horns are more of the black type, but very small.

The natives in this granite country are of the Longware tribe. They are a very poor race, and are much addicted to smoking a drug which is known as "daka." The majority of them consequently are always in a half-dazed state. They live almost entirely on sweet potatoes, and, when they can obtain it, meat. Their huts are very poor, being made of grass and a few small poles. They owe their security from their more warlike neighbours to the fact that they are not worth raiding.

About a week's march from Arebi we met a Belgian N.C.O. with a company of native soldiers. He told us that his party had been attacked a few days before in the forest by some of the Manvu people. One of his soldiers received an arrow through the stomach, and several others were less severely wounded. He managed to shoot one of the assailants. But savages in their own forest are a very difficult

proposition. In affairs of this sort they invariably sneak away through the undergrowth after having discharged a volley of arrows, and to find them again is like looking for the proverbial needle in the bottle of hay.

We spent the night with the party, and next morning heard that a woman had been murdered and eaten within half an hour's walk of our camp. When we left, the Belgian was preparing to go out and endeavour to catch the murderers, but he did not seem to have any great hope of being able to do so.

A few days from Kilo one enters the area of active mining operations. The only gold which has been worked up to the present is alluvial. It seems to be wonderfully rich, and to be present in every stream in the vicinity. The gold is extracted from the gravel by washing through sluice-boxes. There is little doubt that, when transport facilities have developed sufficiently to allow for the transport of machinery, the quartz reefs will be opened up, and then the world will hear of Kilo as a mining area second in Africa only to Jo'burg.

From Kilo a good motor road runs to Kasenye, on Lake Albert. We found the marching on the road very tame and uninteresting after our three months in the wilds. From Kasenye the journey to Nairobi is merely a succession of changes from one form of transport to another. We just got a glimpse from Lake Albert of the snow-capped peaks of the Ruwenzoris, the "Mountains of the Moon," hovering up through the clouds. I should have liked very much to make their closer acquaintance, but had to make my way as speedily as possible to Nairobi.

A SAVOYARD COMMUNITY.

BY THE PROVOST OF TRINITY, DUBLIN.

THE Valley of the Tarentaise is not visited by many English or American tourists. For the most part they approach the Alps by way of Geneva, or begin at Chamonix, or they come up from Italy; and when one mentions the "Alps," people generally think of Switzerland. Indeed, I daresay that a good many travellers to these parts do not know where the Tarentaise is situated. Its beauties have not been widely advertised; the inns are quite unpretending; and except for a few visitors from the south of France it has not yet been discovered by summer travellers.

The Tarentaise is the name given to the district of Savoy which skirts the French Alps to the south-west, and through it you reach one of the two main routes from Gaul to Italy in old times. If you wished to cross the border, you had to look out for a pass through the barrier of the Alps, and of these there were only two that need be considered, one on either side of the vast range of Mont Blanc, now known respectively as the Great St Bernard and the Little St Bernard. And to climb to the pass of the Little St Bernard you had to find your way up the valley of the Isère river, which forms part of the Tarentaise. The railway through Savoy, starting from Chambéry, brings one now as far as Bourg St Maurice, but it can get no farther, for this ancient town is shut in by high mountains. The hillsides are covered with little hamlets, and here the Savoyard mountaineers live much to themselves, isolated from the main highways of traffic. Once you get beyond Bourg St Maurice, you come upon a simple hard-working people, whose habits and traditions are full of interest. If the Isère river be followed until it loses itself in the glaciers of Mont Pourri and its neighbours, a very lovely valley discloses itself — the "Val d'Isère." But the centre of this region is the village of Séez, the ancient *Sestum*, in the "Val Joli," and the *commune* of Séez has a long history.

The inhabitants are mostly peasant proprietors, who cultivate the steep hillsides with extraordinary diligence and success. They can only work in the fields for about six months in the year, as the deep snow keeps them indoors during the winter. They claim that their territory extends beyond what is now the French border, and old people say that if they had their rights they would be in possession of the pastures right

up to, and beyond, the pass of the Little St Bernard—"le Petit," as they call it affectionately. There have been many disputes as to the ownership of this high plateau. The vicissitudes of the kingdom of Savoy caused it to be at one time French territory, at another Italian. But it was finally ruled sixty years ago that the mountaineers of Séez must not claim the right of feeding their cows beyond the pass, where the Italian custom-house stands.

In summer the cows are driven up to the high pastures or *alpages*, 6000 or 7000 feet above sea-level, being collected in herds or *troupeaux* of fifty or a hundred, not all belonging to one farmer, but from the same neighbourhood. Half a dozen are the property of one man, twenty of another, and so on. By keeping them together, the task of herding them is made easier and labour is saved. The milk is generally delivered at creameries worked on the co-operative principle, where each owner gets credit according to the amount supplied by his own cows. These are beautiful and valuable beasts, fawn-coloured and with soft dark eyes, not very large, but used nevertheless to draw carts all over the Savoy lowlands, where there are roads for wheeled vehicles. The sound of their tuneful bells, which carries far on the mountain-sides, tells those whose duty it is to look after them where they are to be found.

The people look as if they led a very hard life. They age rapidly, and the older men and women have rugged and worn faces, although many of the girls are good-looking, not unlike their Italian neighbours. Indeed, the life must be severe in all these Alpine uplands. The soil is as rocky as it is in the county of Galway, and the stones have to be picked off the land before tillage can begin. To gather in the harvest from the hillsides means that the sheaves have to be carried on men's backs, for there are few mule-paths. To watch the men cutting the corn from early dawn, and the women binding it, and then all uniting to carry the sheaves home, while the children are occupied in looking after the cattle, is to realise that these peasants earn their living hardly. The ground is tilled with extraordinary care. Not a rood of fertile soil is wasted; and "catch" crops are taken out, as well as the regular harvest. Much fodder has to be grown for the use of the cows and mules in winter, and the energy is amazing with which the villagers work, not only in the mornings and evenings, but during the scorching heat of a summer day.

Another great industry of these parts, although not so important in the commune of Séez as in the Valley of the Upper Isère (the Haute Tarentaise), is woodcutting. Splendid woods cover many of the hillsides. There are pines in-

numerable, poplars, and walnut-trees; and forestry is studied in a really scientific way. The aspect of the countryside, viewed from any of the hills, is exactly like that depicted in old tapestries—the fields varying in rich colour, according to the progress of the crop, and the poplar-trees standing out in their dignified and artificial manner, while the deep green of the pine forests extends up to the snows. The little farms seem to be much better cared for than those on the Italian slopes, probably because the peasants own the land; the woods, too, are more carefully thinned.

In winter the inhabitants of the hamlets on the steep hillsides are confined for the most part to their châlets, where the cows occupy the basement, the living-rooms being on the first floor and approached by little external staircases. The lofts under the roof are used for the storage of food for the cattle and wood for fuel. The snow may be three or four feet deep, and it is no easy matter to move about. Many of the men are expert carpenters, and turn out excellent work during the winter months, while the girls make lace, some of it very good.

Each hamlet has its own tiny chapel, which is generally kept beautifully clean by the women. A visit from the priest is not very frequent, as he can only occasionally reach the more distant villages; and the more devoutly disposed of the villagers are accustomed to say their own prayers in the church on Sundays when (as is very often the case) mass cannot be celebrated. Indeed, the people say (whether accurately or not, I do not know) that there are now only two priests for the whole community, both of whom live at Séez, where there is a big parish church, built in the seventeenth century. It is not an interesting building, but the parish is a very ancient one, now reckoned as in the diocese of Chambéry, but having been in former times under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Aosta, when the patronage was in the gift of the monastery of the Little St Bernard. The only churchyard or cemetery in the district is behind the parish church—a somewhat insanitary situation from the point of view of the Séez shopkeepers, one would think. So, when a death occurs on the hillsides, the body has to be brought down to the mother church for burial, a sort of sleigh or *traineau* being used for its transport in winter down the snow-covered mule-paths.

The men of the *commune* are independent in their manners, as befits landowners in their own right; but they are very courteous when they are treated with due respect to their dignity. They do not usually salute a stranger, unless he salutes them first, but they are quite ready for a talk as one passes and to dilate on the laboriousness of their life. Sturdy yeomen, in fact, they

have not been spoilt by tourists. The women dress charmingly on fête-days and Sundays, wearing a becoming gilt coif of the Tudor pattern, with a gay kerchief or shawl round their shoulders; and the well-to-do farmers' wives have sometimes a rich dress of silk, in which they look most dignified and important. They generally wear as an ornament a little Savoy cross of characteristic pattern. One and all, however, work hard, and their industry is conspicuous everywhere. There are hardly any *cafés* on these hillsides, and very few wine-shops, even of the poorest kind. It is not a wine country, as vines do not prosper in the snows. Tobacco can be had occasionally at Séez itself, but there is very little smoking. That may be due, in part, to the high price of wine and tobacco, consequent on the war, as the like abstinence may be noticed in other parts of France; but there is no doubt that these hillmen habitually live an austere life. On the Italian side of the Alps you will see half a dozen wine-shops for one on the Savoy side, some of them with bowling-greens of a primitive kind, where the young men may disport themselves. But there are few of such amenities of life among the mountaineers of the commune of Séez.

As one climbs the steep path or *sentier* which leads from Séez up the mountain-side of Beau Pré, and as, rising to six thousand feet or so, one passes through bleak and rocky country, it is interesting to recall that this is the old Roman way from Gaul to Italy, reaching its highest point at the pass of the Little St Bernard, more than seven thousand feet high. There is now, indeed, a very fine road to the pass, ascending Mont Valaisan in zigzags, up which motor-cars are driven, and the views of the Tarentaise from this are magnificent. But the older road is the road with a history, and has been used for thousands of years. The Celtic tribesmen, who occupied in Roman times the two passes now known by the name of St Bernard, used to give a great deal of annoyance to travellers. They were at last exterminated by the Emperor Augustus, who founded the city of Augusta or *Aosta* as a sort of border fortress commanding the roads. Monuments of Roman origin are still to be seen at the top of the passes—the Mont Joux and Colonne Joux, originally dedicated to Jupiter, the ruler of the thunder and the storm.

There was probably some kind of shelter for wayfarers in these bleak places under the Roman domination. But it was in the tenth century (about 960 A.D.) that the famous hospices of St Bernard—the Great St Bernard on the north-eastern pass, and the Little St Bernard on that to the south-east—were founded by a great Christian philanthropist. St Bernard of Menthon is not to be confounded with the austere Cis-

tercian, St Bernard of Clairvaux, who condemned Abelard, preached a crusade, and was, indeed, the dictator of Western Christendom. Nor is our Alpine saint to be identified with the Cluniac monk, Bernard of Morlaix, whose grand hymn on the heavenly country is so familiar in its English dress as "Jerusalem the golden." St Bernard of Menthon was a young man of noble family, whose father and mother had expected him to marry a beautiful girl of their choice, and to succeed them as the lord of Menthon. But the legend tells that he chose rather the "religious" life. Living in self-denial, charity, and sanctity, he was ordained priest, and ultimately became Archdeacon of Aosta. The iron rule of the Cæsars had long since disappeared, and once again the Alpine passes were infested with marauding bands who troubled Christian pilgrims. The righteous soul of the saint was vexed that such things should be, and having brought about the expulsion of the brigands and planted the Cross on the ruins of the ancient Temple of Jupiter, he established the refuges which for a thousand years have borne his name. From time to time the ecclesiastical status of the monks of St Bernard has been changed, but hospitality and protection have ever since his day been provided for poor travellers passing between Italy and France.

It is only on the Great St Bernard that any monks are now to be found. Fifty or sixty of them, belonging to the Order of Augustinian Canons, live in the monastery, to which the great hospice, known to so many tourists, is attached. It was by this pass that Napoleon led the French into Italy. But the monks have disappeared from the Little St Bernard, which is the pass over which our mountaineers from the commune of Séez cross the frontier. The hospice still remains, and retains its old traditions of free hospitality to the poor. It is maintained, however, not by monks, but by the Military Order of St Maurice and St Lazarus, of which the King of Italy is the Grand Master; and the present building was restored under royal auspices in 1862. All, except the very poor, who lodge there, pay for their rooms and their food at the customary hotel rates, rough as the fare is; and, except that there is a little chapel in the house, and that the arrangements are controlled by a "rector" in Holy Orders, there is nothing monastic about it. It may surprise some who think of a "hospice" as a medieval kind of place, to learn that there is electric light in the rooms! But the fact is, that of recent years you will find electric light in most of the larger Alpine villages and inns, the water-power being got from the mountain torrents for nothing except the cost of a simple installation. A few of the famous St Bernard dogs are still kept at the hospice.

A remarkable feature of this bleak and grim mountain pass is a lovely rock-garden, which was created by the late rector, Rev. Pierre Chanoux, who was not only the beloved pastor of his people, but an enthusiastic botanist, and who collected plants from the Himalayas and the Pyrenees as well as from the Alps. "Chanousia," for so this garden is called, is kept up by the Order of St Maurice, and provides by itself a quite sufficient attraction to lovers of flowers to induce them to make a pilgrimage to the Little St Bernard—a quite easy journey now by the new motor road for those who cannot face the climb up the steep path that the peasants of Séez still use, as they bring their cattle to graze on the high Savoy slopes. The flowers are only to be seen for about three months in the summer, as the snow begins to cover them for their winter sleep as early as September.

Whether for its exceeding beauty, or for the interest attaching to its old traditions, or as providing opportunities for studying a self-contained community of mountaineers, there are few districts in the Alps which offer greater attractions to a quiet visitor than the district of Séez in the Tarentaise. And the mountain road into Italy through the pass leads into one of the fairest parts of Piedmont, to the foot of Mont Blanc at Courmayeur, and to Aosta with its memories of the ancient Roman occupation.

J. H. Bernard.

FROM THE OUTPOSTS.

THE MARKSMAN.

PRIVATE FADALMULLA sat on a rock and reflectively picked at a jigger in his little toe. Close by, a few kids, nominally under the control of two diminutive and undraped infants, gambolled and butted each other in a languid manner. A venerable savage, with a yard of tattered and dirty americani round his loins, had completed the lengthy process of choosing a really comfortable boulder for a pillow, and was composing himself for his diurnal nap under an adjacent thorn-bush. The Manyatta, a rambling collection of dome-shaped huts surrounded by a straggling zeriba, seemed to have settled down for the day. The camels and goats had been milked and driven off to graze. Such of the ladies as had not set out with their water-pots in the direction of the wells had betaken themselves to their domestic tasks and gossip. A few elmoran[1] sat idly in the shade of the huts, while the majority had disappeared towards some unknown rendezvous of laziness and meat-eating in the bush. In fact, the only living creatures that were really taking an active interest in life were the flies, some thousands of which buzzed round Fadalmulla's head, or settled on the features of the recumbent and undisturbed old gentleman by his side.

On the whole, Fadalmulla was contented. It gave him some satisfaction to think that most of his companions-in-arms would have been drilling at daybreak, and would at that moment probably be engaged in some tedious fatigue. Had Fadalmulla been of their number, he would probably even now be standing, like a block of carved ebony, in front of the orderly-room table, receiving with outward calm, but no little inward discomfort, the pointed remarks of his Company Commander anent the uncleanness of his rifle on parade that morning. However, Allah in his goodness had ordained that he should be sent on guard to an outlying manyatta, and as his corporal happened to be also his son-in-law (for Fadalmulla was something of a veteran), his lot seemed for the moment to have fallen in a pleasant place. Moreover, the plump little wife of old Leboteng yonder had thrown him not a few saucy glances as she moved among the camels with her bowl at milking-time that morning. So Fadalmulla, stripped

[1] Warrior.

to his khaki shorts, with his fat black body shining like a hippo in the sunlight, was on the whole contented. Still, at the back of his mind, that musketry affair still rankled.

Once, when he was escorting a mail safari, Fadalmulla had shot a bustard quite eighty paces distant. Round the camp fires at night, and during the dragging noontide hours in the hot boma, he had not been sparing with repetitions of the tale of his prowess, nor had the distance of the bustard and the quickness and accuracy of the shot lost anything in the telling. So when, thanks to the bewitching of his bullets by some evil shaitan, his Bwana at the end of the musketry course had announced him to be a third-class shot, he had been the butt of a good many rude scoffs.

Of course Fadalmulla knew that he was not *really* a third-class shot, for no third-class shot could possibly have killed a bustard which, if it wasn't actually flying at the moment, was certainly just getting ready to fly. However, he had not been able to tell his Bwana about the bustard, for there was an unaccountable prejudice against people using their ammunition for shooting bustards, so Fadalmulla had been obliged to remain a target for the taunts of the ill-mannered.

This train of thought was only partially disturbed by the sight of three elmoran, who came running in an excited manner towards the manyatta. What feather-pated fools those elmoran were! Look at that one in front, hopping up and down now in front of the corporal, like a great marabout stork, shouting "Woh! woh! woh!" like one afflicted of Allah. But while Fadalmulla's slow-moving brain was still pondering contemptuously on the antics of the newcomers, his disciplined body acted on the instant in response to its years of training, and no sooner had the shrill toots of the corporal's whistle carried the alarm to his ear than he was hobbling as fast as his bad toe would permit in the direction of his rifle and bandolier, and in hardly more time than it takes to write he and his five companions were grouped round their N.C.O., stolidly receiving that worthy's instructions.

The story brought by the elmoran was short, nor was there anything in it very novel to its hearers. Soon after daybreak Turkana raiders, "like the blades of grass in number," had swooped down on a neighbouring manyatta and "eaten it up." They (the elmoran) had performed deeds of unparalleled valour, but the Turkana were too many, and were even now driving off the stock, while the ground was strewn with the disembowelled corpses of the women and children. Would the askaris come quickly and discomfort the dreaded "long-spears" with their rifles?

The corporal had heard the

story before. The Turkana were always "like the blades of grass in number"; the elmoran had always performed prodigies; and, nine times out of ten, at the end of a long hot double through the bush, he had found nothing but a manyatta seething with panic, because, forsooth, some laiyuni[1] had seen what he thought was a Turkana scout on a distant hillside. However, his duty was plain, and his orders came without hesitation. Two elmoran were sent racing through the bush to the boma, to repeat the tale to the Bwana. He himself, with five men, set off hot-foot, though sceptical, toward the scene of the rumoured affray; and Fadalmulla, thanks to the jigger in his toe, was left behind in the manyatta to prepare a bowl of refreshing uji[2] against the coming again of the combatant party. Within five minutes of the elmoran's arrival all was in train, and Fadalmulla, serene amidst the panic-stricken buzzing of the now thoroughly awakened manyatta, had calmly started upon his culinary labours.

The making of uji, like everything else in this world, doubtless requires more skill than the uninitiated would imagine, but for all that it can hardly be said to call for great mental exertion; so it was not long before Fadalmulla's brain had once more assumed the pleasant lethargy which alone makes a long hot day endurable. However, no sooner had he become comfortably comatose than he was again aroused by alarums and excursions. This time the disturbers of the peace were four terrified little maidens, who came scampering at a great pace through the bush, incoherently screaming their tidings as they ran.

Fadalmulla remembered that he now held the responsible position of O.C. troops in the manyatta, so, rising reluctantly to his feet, he elbowed his way into the cluster of excited villagers who were crowding round the newcomers, and whose staccato lamentations bore witness to the badness of the tidings. It seemed that the story of the raid was not a false one. Not only had the neighbouring manyatta been attacked, but a large band of Turkana warriors, flushed with their easy triumph, were even now approaching through the bush. The little girls, who had been watching the young camels grazing from the vantage-point of a high rock, had heard their distant war-song and had caught sight of them as they crossed a rocky ridge not a mile away.

Now in the warfare of raids and counter-raids there is one invariable rule—when attacked, run away. You may concentrate in the bush for a counter-attack, or you may content yourself with harrassing the

[1] Immature boy.

[2] A sort of gruel.

withdrawal of the raiders, and trust to a counter-raid to avenge your dead and recoup yourself for your looted stock, but the first move is to run. And run the manyatta did! Mothers snatched up their babies; pot-bellied little urchins, shepherded by lanky elder sisters, rolled eyes of uncomprehending terror as they trundled off as fast as their little legs would carry them. Old men hobbled away at a painful amble, while here and there an aged crone dragged herself frantically through the bush, whimpering in desperation for a helping hand, the withered skin of her shoulder-blades already twitching in anticipation of the inevitable spear-thrust. The elmoran of the village had already taken to the bush at the first alarm; but had they not done so, they would most certainly and shamelessly have led the *sauve qui peut.* Only Fadalmulla stood quite stolidly over his uji pot, his eyes perhaps a trifle brighter than before, but his black face showing no signs of any particular military ardour, and quite surely none of fear.

And then a thing happened which shows that a woman's heart is always much the same, be the skin which covers it black or white. Back through the bush, with her little black baby strapped between her shoulders, came the plump little wife of old Leboteng. No word she spoke, but her gesture as she seized Fadalmulla's elbow and pointed to the bush spoke as plainly as any words. From the van of the flight, whither her sturdy young legs had quickly carried her, she had turned back, risking thereby a far more evil fate than the swift spear-thrust which would send the grandmothers of the tribe to their last rest, to urge this obstinate great man creature into safety.

Fadalmulla understood, and pitied her. Yes, pitied her for her stupidity. After all, she was only a poor ignorant creature, and could hardly be expected to understand. He, an askari of G Company, run away from a lot of miserable shouting shenzis![1] And what about the uji? What would the corporal say when he got back and found it all spilt, and very likely the cooking-pot with its bottom smashed in by the butt-end of a spear? Why, he would probably be brought up before the Bwana and have to pay for a new one, and anyhow the other men of the company would pull his leg about it for months. Still, the poor creature meant well, and he would see that she was all right. So there was no roughness in the gesture with which Fadalmulla took her arm and led her trembling to the shelter of a big rock a few yards from the entrance of the manyatta. Signing to her to lie down, he

[1] Savages.

charged his magazine, and setting himself in the position prescribed in the regulations for "firing, kneeling behind cover," rested his rifle on the rock and awaited developments.

Fadalmulla had not long to wait. Louder and louder through the bush came the rhythmical throbbing of the raiders' deep-throated war-song. For this was the open and defiant phase of the attack, very different to the stealthy preliminaries and first sudden onslaught. Through the long night the raiding hordes had marched quickly and silently across the darkened face of the wilderness. Soundless as a spectral army they had crept up to the sleeping manyatta. Then, as the first grey light of dawn revealed the huts and penned-in herds, had come the swift deadly rush, the screaming of the women, the glorious stabbing into squirming bodies newly roused from sleep, the spouting blood, the wild joy of rape and killing. And a little later, drunk with blood and partly sated lust, the warriors had grouped themselves in leaping, shouting phalanxes of deviiry, and casting secrecy and caution to the winds, scoured the stricken country seeking what they might devour.

It was one of these bands which now advanced towards the seemingly abandoned manyatta. In a solid mass it came, little impeded by the open bush, and heedless in its ecstasy of thorns that tore and rocks that cut and bruised. Quivering spears, held shoulder high, flashed red in the sun. Rolling eyeballs gleamed, and here and there in the mass a lithe warrior bounded high in the air, showing to the waist-line above the heads of his companions. Now and again a frenzied champion would burst from the ranks and manœuvre with thrown-back head in a mimic skirmish in the van of the advancing troop. And above all, permeating all, throbbed the steady pulsing roar of the blood-chant.

To any white onlooker, no matter how brave or how confident in the forces at his disposal, there must have been something dreadful in the scene; something elemental, some momentary triumph of the primitive powers of evil over the goodness of God; some hideous nightmare that, seen again in dreams, would waken the dreamer in a shuddering sweat, even though at the moment the threatening spears left his courage unshaken. But Fadalmulla, alone and unsupported except for the trembling woman cowering at his side, cared for none of these things; to him it was only a mob of shouting, jumping shenzis, and he knew exactly what to do. He waited till the troop was some hundred and fifty yards away, and then he "browned" it.

Fadalmulla denies this hotly. He declares that he picked his

men and aimed as he had been taught to do when dealing with "Figure Target No. 1, Practice 16." However, I still maintain, having some small knowledge of Fadalmulla's musketry, that he "browned" the mob.

Crack! went the rifle. A huge form shot into the air, spun half round, and crashed on to the bodies of its neighbours. Crack! again. A front-rank man stopped, knelt down, and collapsed into himself, while two of his followers stumbled headlong over his body. The phalanx wavered; the blood-chant tailed off into a ragged medley of disordered sound. This was not in the programme at all. The magic of the rifle was only too well known to the raiders. The cunning of the white man and his soldiers was infinite. Who could tell what dreadful traps were hidden in the seemingly empty manyatta? Crack! crack! Fadalmulla's bolt worked with automatic regularity. Where was now the phalanx? For just one minute the bush was peopled with fleeing forms, leaping like antelope over the rocks, dodging through the thorns, and then—peace. Only in the foreground two figures lay very still; a form writhed spread-eagled across a rock, while another, with trailing legs, strove pitifully to drag itself into the concealment of a bush.

Then, from behind the manyatta, came a little counter-wave of warriors, ever so bold now. It swept past Fadalmulla. A dozen spears flashed. The writhing form writhed no more. The crawler stopped, raised himself painfully on his elbow, and with one despairing effort flung his spear right through the throat of the nearest of his pursuers, sinking back next instant transfixed by a score of thrusts. Fadalmulla replaced four empty cartridge cases in his bandolier (for purposes of record), and limped back to the uji. After a while, the plump little wife of Leboteng crept from the rock and squatted silently by his side. The baby, unmoved by war's alarms, howled for his dinner.

. . . . . .

The white man sat in the shade of a thorn-tree near the manyatta. It was past four o'clock, and he had had a long day of it, but, on the whole, he was pleased with results. His manyatta guard had proved its value. The corporal's party had dropped on the bulk of the raiders in the nick of time, and had bagged a dozen in a stern-chase. He, with his main body, had cut across the route of the flying enemy, and had trebled their casualties before they vanished, as usual, like a drifting fog in the bush. All the looted stock had been recovered. Thanks to their fleetness of foot, his tribesmen's losses had been limited to a few old women and a couple of warriors who had pressed over rashly in the pursuit. The last of his command to report had been Fadalmulla,

and that veteran's account had been brief and unadorned. However, the white man knew enough of such happenings to be able pretty well to reconstruct the scene.

Black is black and white is white, but there are moments when the black comes very close to the white man's heart; and I do not suppose that Fadalmulla had, or ever will have, any idea of how close he stood to his Bwana's heart at that moment. The brief narrative was over, but Fadalmulla still stood, fidgeting rather uneasily, in front of his Bwana.

"Well, Fadalmulla," said the Bwana, "have you got anything else to say?"

For a moment Fadalmulla contemplated his jigger-infested toe. Then, "Bwana," he said, "to-day I fired four cartridges, and got four bulls. Am I still a third-class shot?"

. . . . . .

Musketry returns are sacred things, and I do not like to think that they are ever tampered with. Still, when I last saw Private Fadalmulla, he wore upon his sleeve a marksman's badge.

L. A.

MUSINGS WITHOUT METHOD.

THE BLACK YEAR—PSYCHOANALYSIS.

We cannot look back upon the year 1920 without a feeling of shame. Not one of the gallant promises made to us by our politicians has been kept. We have not a land fit for heroes to live in, and even if we might boast that happy land, there are not enough heroes to people it. There are, and have been throughout 1920, thousands of turbulent spirits ready to brawl and rebel at the bidding of their greedy, unpatriotic leaders. And were it not for the horrors of bloodshed, we might sigh for the days, not long past, when the whole country was united by a common danger.

William II. is still a woodcutter of the Netherlands, and German goods are freely admitted to our English ports, in plain defiance of the twin promises that the Kaiser should be "canned," to use the amiable euphemism of America, and that English industry should be duly protected. For our part, we were (and are) as stoutly opposed to the foolish project of punishing William II. as to the free importation of articles made in Germany. And we find small satisfaction in the thought that the anti-dumping bill will be passed on the day when the Kaiser is sent to the gallows, and not before.

By a strange chance, prophecies have failed us as promises have failed us. When America made her tardy entrance into the war, Mr Wilson, then her spokesman, announced that he was going to make the world safe for democracy. But he failed utterly to make either the world or democracy safe for anything. One consequence of the war has been completely to extinguish democracy, in Great Britain at any rate. Using the word democracy in its only legitimate sense as a form of government, we may say that in these islands it is but a memory. It died of a surfeit—a surfeit of votes—and the year that is passed has witnessed its death, though it has not given it decent burial. Our politicians, in truth, still persist in carrying the corpse up and down the street, in the pious hope that the mob may not notice the inevitable process of decay. A vain persistence! For no pretence can give to our democracy a momentary flutter of life. It is dead, and we are curious only to see what sort of a successor it will have when its demise is generally acknowledged. At present there are two claimants eager for the vacancy. On the one hand, a cunning autocracy clamours for control; on the other, a strong minority hopes to succeed by

the exercise of blackmail. Thus the alternatives are set before us: the masked tyranny of Mr George, and the threat, reiterated by Messrs Thomas, Clynes, and the rest, to "down tools" if their whims are not satisfied. Such is the choice presented to us after many years of popular government, and the careless granting of universal suffrage to men and women alike.

The choice is not alluring. The tyranny of Mr George is dangerous, because it is a tyranny exercised ruthlessly over the House of Commons, which exists merely to record the Minister's decrees, and feebly over the voters, whom the tyrant does not wish to alienate. As Mr George makes slaves of his colleagues, so there is no well-organised union which cannot make a slave of Mr George. While the Prime Minister usurps the duties of the whole Cabinet, reducing the Secretaries of State to the position of menials, he waits humbly, hat in hand, to receive the instructions of a powerful trade union. The result is dangerous alike to the government of the Empire and to our relations with foreign countries. Mr George has no settled policy, as we all know; and though he insists upon speaking for the whole of Great Britain, he may be turned aside from his purpose by the truculence of any section noisy enough to be heard. And to him there are opposed the champions of Soviet rule, the ignorant men who still believe in the beneficence of Lenin, and who regard murder, not as a fine art, but as a piece of practical politics. If they had their way, there would be an end of us all. The British Empire would perish with our civilisation. And a handful of fanatical scoundrels, mostly Jews, would kill and torture all those who had dared to educate themselves and to acquire skill in their trades or professions, that they might be free to grind the "proletariat" beneath their heels. The prospect offers but one small consolation. The "high-brows," who in their vain assumption of intellectual superiority have played with crime and preached sedition in their studies, would be rewarded for their folly by being instantly driven into the pit of death.

But not even the extermination of the "high-brows" would make a revolution tolerable, nor can we regard Mr George as a sufficient defence against murder and torture. And he has so cunningly contrived things that he seems to remain our one and only defence. He has drugged the House of Commons by his rhetoric, and soothed its members with the prospect of an increase in their salaries; and the chance of living once more under a free and a wise government is remote indeed. That is what we have to thank 1920 for, and it is not strange that we look back without pride or contentment upon the dead year. And all the while that Mr George

and his friends are driving the Houses of Parliament into contempt, they boast that they have brought to an end the wicked practices of party government. Of course they have done nothing of the kind. In a sense they have checked the conflict of parties, because they have won over to their side, by the subtle arts of flattery and deception, all but the impotent little band which is led by the inept Mr Asquith. But it is principle which they have killed rather than party. Even those who professed to believe that the union of Ireland with Great Britain was of vital importance to the State, as indeed it is, are ready to support any scheme of scission, if only it can be made acceptable to those who march through rapine and murder to the dismemberment of the Empire.

We need not regard too closely the preposterous pledges which the Prime Minister gave in exchange for votes at the General Election. He then followed the practice of all vain politicians, and none but his dupes put any faith in him. He was but lowering the standard of politics, like the rest of his kind, when he promised what he knew he could not perform; and he should have appeared credible to none when he declared that the Germans should pay what they owed in full, even if he had to search their pockets for the money. No less futile was the solemn pact which he made with the electors to introduce into the public offices the strictest habits of economy. He has made little or no attempt to get rid of the bureaucrats, who eat up the country like locusts.

The past year has seen such an orgy of crime in Ireland as is unknown even in the annals of that wicked country. The Sinn Feiners and their masters of the Irish Republican Brotherhood have given full play to their delight in murder, under the false pretence that they have been ill-governed by the English. That they have any grievance at all cannot be maintained. Ireland is not and has never been a separate and independent kingdom. A hundred times have the Irish willingly confessed their allegiance to Great Britain. And so far is Ireland from suffering any hardship, that she is the spoilt child of the Empire, exempt from oppressive laws and monstrously over-represented in the Parliament of the United Kingdom. Yet so deep-seated is her love of assassination that her sons cannot keep their hands from slaying and murdering. Confronted by the vile conspiracy of the Sinn Feiners, Mr George should have seen one plain duty before him. He should at all costs and by all means have suppressed the conspiracy. If martial law was necessary, as we believe it to have been, he should have proclaimed it. If a series of block-houses would have thwarted the activities of the gun-men and enabled us to catch them red-handed, the

block-houses should have been built and manned. But Mr George, dominated as usual by fear—fear of the Irish, fear of Labour, fear of making up his mind—did nothing for many months, and acted, or rather spoke, at last only when the rebellion had gained the upper hand. In the meantime, he introduced a Home Rule Bill which pleased nobody, and was accepted as a fine piece of irony only by a reluctant Ulster. If the Bill was intended to ensure a union of hearts, it failed signally, for it merely encouraged the campaign of murder and mutilation. However, that is the politician's happy way. Afraid of action, he thinks that he may save a world of disorder by a piece of legislation, and persists in countering the enemy's guns by facile exercises in rhetoric. He might as well placate a mad dog by a soothing whistle.

As in Ireland, 1920 has been a year without a policy, so also it has been a year without a policy in Russia. Russia has thrust herself into our domestic politics because it is Lenin's settled purpose to flood the whole of Western Europe with his jackal's gospel. How far he has succeeded is obvious to us all. In the extreme wing of our Labour party he has found imitators, facile and obedient as monkeys, to imitate his crimes and to disperse his doctrines. Having laid waste his own country and reduced its inhabitants to the misery of hunger and destitution, he hopes to involve the inhabitants of other countries in a like ruin. The dupes whom he has found in England are as ignorant as they are insincere — ignorant, because they refuse to learn what has happened in Russia; insincere, because they are ready to accept even the jargon, foreign in word and significance, of the Jewish Bolsheviks. For these reasons it was Mr George's duty to declare what policy he intended to support against the machinations of the Bolsheviks. So long as Lenin's criminals were permitted to come and go as they would in England, England was not safe. And Mr George has done, according to his wont, precisely nothing—or, rather, he has given with one hand and taken away with the other, until we close the year in the same spirit of mischievous uncertainty in which we began it.

He has abused Bolshevism, and showed an unseemly desire to trade with Bolsheviks. He has opened many markets to men whom, said he, he would never shake by the hand. He has expelled Kameneff, and kept Krassin glued to his side. Alternately he has reviled and flattered, threatened and cajoled. What his policy is to-day is wholly uncertain, and if he have a policy at all it will surely be changed to-morrow. Yet Mr George presumes to speak for Great Britain, and he knows no more of Great Britain than he knows

of Russia. From every position which he takes up he retreats with indecent haste. Commerce, he once assured us, did not imply the recognition of Lenin; and as it was his intention to permit trade only with the Co-operative Societies of Russia, our dealings would be unstained by blood: nor should we accept in payment the stolen gold of the Bolsheviks. And then it turned out that the Bolsheviks were masters of the Co-operative Societies, and any gold, no matter what its provenance, was welcome. It is a sorry story of deception and tergiversation; and while the twists and turns of Mr George's agile unknowing mind must vastly amuse the unspeakable Lenin and Trotsky, they should bring the blush of shame to the cheeks of honest Englishmen. In the same spirit of bad faith, with the same lack of candour, Mr George tackled the Polish question. On 11th July he demanded that the Soviet should make an immediate armistice with Poland. Ten days later Lord Curzon, who of course takes his orders from Mr George, threatened the Russians with the severest pains and penalties if they continued their march upon Poland. The Russians laughed at the warning, and went on marching. We did nothing more than repeat a futile threat. And then suddenly Labour intervened with their policy of direct action, and shrieked aloud, "Hands off Russia!" as though Mr George had dared to lay a finger upon Russia or upon any other country. Poland took the matter into her own hands and drove the Russians back, and thus by a single blow exposed the impotence of Mr George and the folly of Labour. And so the futile game is played. Great Britain protests in vain to Russia and to Poland; the Prime Minister listens in terror to the strident voice of Mr Bevin; and the Bolsheviks persist with their baleful work of propaganda in light-hearted contempt of Mr George and his words.

The profound distrust of Mr George, which is evident in France, cannot surprise us. It is impossible to trust a man who has neither knowledge nor fixity of purpose. To us his quick changes are familiar. The French are not yet accustomed to them, and it is not wonderful that more than once during the past year they have been compelled to protest against what seemed to them a patent disloyalty. How, indeed, should they welcome as a friend a Minister who, without warning or warrant, seems to espouse the cause of Germany? That there has not been a dangerous rupture between England and France, the two necessary Allies, is not the fault of Mr George; and it is fortunate that there are still those who can undo some of the harm which our careless, autocratic politician thinks it expedient to inflict

upon us and upon the French.

Yet in the eyes of his colleagues he can do no wrong. Their adulation of him and his virtues increases with every folly which he commits. The adulation is not always disinterested, and the private judgments which come to our ears —every one is not discreet— make a sad commentary upon the loyal utterances of the politicians. But the politicians are not the men to foul their own nests; and so long as Mr George is there to lead them they are ready to follow him to the death of themselves or their salaries. And the strange thing is that, in public at any rate, they use such language about their revered master as persuades us that they have wholly lost whatever sense of humour they may have possessed. If nobody else has a word of praise for him, they are there to praise Mr George, while Mr George reciprocates the praise as in duty bound. Listen, for instance, to what Mr Bonar Law found it possible to say at the Constitutional Club: "Standing the other day in Westminster Abbey" — these are Mr Law's words—"at the grave of the Unknown Warrior, I saw the noble statue of William Pitt, with arms outstretched as if he were inspiring the nation he did so much to save. To one of my colleagues, as we were leaving the Abbey, I said: 'One hundred years hence will Lloyd George occupy in the minds of our descendants the position held by William Pitt to-day?' 'I cannot tell,' was the reply, 'but I think it is quite possible.' It is indeed quite possible." Was ever such nonsense spoken in the world before? William Pitt and Mr George mentioned in the same breath! If the burial of the Unknown Warrior suggested no wiser speculation to the politicians than this, it would have been better that they should have stayed away and left the ceremony to the soldiers, who know how to bear themselves with dignity. William Pitt and Mr George! William Pitt, the pilot who weathered the storm, knew what should be done to save England, and did it unflinchingly. He was no empiric, guessing at policies. He had profoundly studied Europe and her affairs. He understood the problem which confronted him —how to defeat Napoleon— with the clearness which comes of diligently acquired knowledge. Before his death he foresaw what only a statesman could foresee—that Napoleon would be beaten by a nation in arms, probably in Spain. The strenuous opposition which his resolution to save England met with he countered without fear and without favour. He was not afraid of suspending the liberties of treacherous citizens, or of locking up those who hoped to frustrate his efforts by sedition. He depended upon idle rhetoric as little as he depended upon hid-

ing the truth. He could deliver a King's Speech offhand, said Windham, thus making plain how little he owed to a florid eloquence. A simple man and a patriot, with no thought of self and with no suspicion of trickery—such he was until the last day, when he gave his life for his country. How shall we compare Mr George with this our hero? Mr George has ever his ear to the ground, that he may catch the whisperings of popularity. While Pitt consulted his own wisdom, Mr George runs for advice to Mr Bevin or Mr Henderson or Mr Smillie, or anybody else whom he thinks capable of influencing the bogey, Labour. While Pitt had ever a settled policy, Mr George lives hungrily from hand to mouth, and hopes that the better luck of to-morrow may extricate him from the misfortune of to-day. In brief, Pitt was a statesman, and Mr George is a politician. They share no common factor, and not even a pious colleague should divest himself so rashly of a sense of proportion and a sense of history as to make the futile comparison.

Not long since Colonel Amery made the brilliant discovery that "the standard of efficiency of the House of Commons had never been so high as now." A marvellous utterance truly, made at a time when the voice of criticism at Westminster was solemnly hushed, and when members of the House waited for the Prime Minister to speak before they opened their mouths. The reason he gave for his hazardous opinion was that "they had got rid of the two-party system." What they have got rid of, as we have said, is political principle. And then, as though to clinch any argument, Colonel Amery declares that "our salvation lies more than ever before in being able to think imperially." Indeed it does, and it is just this of which Mr George and his colleagues and his obedient followers are incapable. They are rarely asked to think at all. They have been deprived of the right of private judgment. And to think imperially is very far beyond their reach. Take a swift survey of our Empire, and ask yourself in which corner of it there is any trace of imperial thought. Have we thought imperially in Ireland, which we have handed over a free gift to a gang of assassins? Have we thought imperially in India? Ask Mr Montagu, who, in spite of his gross failure in act and speech, in spite of his declared friendship for Mr Gandhi, is still Secretary of State. So little has he thought imperially that he has stirred up the flame of rebellion in India in order to awake what his Bolshevist tongue calls "divine discontent," and to enfranchise one per cent of a population which, happily for itself, cares not a jot about politics. Have we thought imperially in Egypt? Ask Lord Milner, under whose auspices we shall presently surrender all

control of a country which Bismarck wisely called the nape of England's neck. Where, indeed, have we thought imperially? In Mesopotamia, into which we blundered without purpose and without result? In Palestine, where we have replaced the industrious Jews, who wing their way to America, by a horde of indiscriminate Bolshevists, and where we have inflicted a gross injustice upon the friendly and honourable Arabs? Truly it would be wiser at this moment of our disgrace, at this closing of a disastrous year, to leave imperial thought out of the question.

It is not only in politics that the charlatan makes an aggressive appearance. The charlatan delights also to claim as his own the province of literary criticism, a province which lies far beyond his ken, and which he is never likely to explore. For many years this particular kind of charlatan followed the lead of Lombroso, and thought that he was getting nearer to the understanding of literature when he mumbled commonplaces about genius and the criminal. The method set before him was simple enough. He wanted no more than a biographical dictionary and a taste for gossip. His information need not be accurate. He was free to believe with Lombroso that Henry VIII. murdered all his wives. But if only he filled the rag-bag of his mind with enough "facts" and got by heart the foolish jargon employed by Lombroso, he could prove that there was no difference between the madman and the man of genius. The poet had given him and his master the clue, "Great wits to madness closely are allied"; and imbecility and a love of scandal did the rest. Nor did it ever occur to these fanatics that, in their haste to prove others "mattoids," they were convicting themselves one and all of an obvious insanity.

Lombroso's method is as dead as Lombroso. And the need exists for a new species of sham science, a fresh kind of criticism, which is called "literary," and has not the remotest touch with literature. With a commendable amiability Herr Freud has supplied the need, and given to the busybodies a system which is not beyond the reach of the wholly illiterate. Psychoanalysis it is called, and we are informed by an obedient pupil of Herr Freud that "it will show us the direction that literature will take, and will explain why it proceeds in a particular path." So says Mr Mordell,[1] who has written a book which, for obvious silliness, cannot be matched even by the worst excesses of the pupils of Lombroso. After all, there is not much difference between Lombroso and Herr Freud. Lombroso believed that all literary

[1] 'The Erotic Motive in Literature,' by Albert Mordell. London: K. Paul.

men were mad; Herr Freud seems to believe them incestuous. Herr Freud does not use the same jargon as Lombroso, and his conclusion is not quite the same. But gossip, of doubtful accuracy, is the foundation of both methods, and for folly there isn't a pin to choose between them.

We have noted the commonplace thought which underlies Lombroso's argument. Herr Freud's argument, commonplace also, is that a writer, when he takes his pen in his hand, does not wholly rid himself of character and experience. We do not need a library of books, unscientific in all things except in a preposterous jargon, to illustrate this truism for us. But Mr Mordell and his kind must find some use for the irrelevant facts which they have collected, and so psychoanalysis is thrust upon the world. The facts are chosen with an irrelevance which the pupils of Lombroso must envy. What do you think of the statement which follows: "Alexander Pope, the poet, was also a spoiled child, though he had a half-sister"! There is charming inconsequence in the "though," which proves Mr Mordell a born critic. A still further surprise awaits us in another gem of erudition. "Thackeray, who was hopelessly in love with a married woman, and was rejected by her, affected to be very cynical at disappointed lovers, and ridiculed them in his 'Pendennis.' Cicero, who loved glory, wrote against it." No wonder Herr Freud hails the disciple who has made these profound discoveries, and congratulates him on having done "for the English-American literature something similar to what Rank has done for the German in his book on Incest-Motive."

"Incest-Motive"! That is the pith of the whole matter. Herr Freud and his scholars are obsessed by perversity. They detect vice, unconscious if you will, in all the decent relations of life. To Mr Mordell, for instance, Cowper's poem, "On the receipt of my Mother's Picture," is "the best example of the Œdipus-Complex to be found in English literature." Thus, to serve no decent purpose, the pupils of Herr Freud crawl like slugs, leaving a filthy trail behind them, over whatever is noble and comely in poetry and prose. But even they are not without a question. Mr Mordell, having established to his own satisfaction the insane theory that a child's love for his mother resembles that of Œdipus for Jocasta, seems to think that some sort of an apology is necessary. "It of course displeases people," says he, "to have any association made between the noblest sentiment, mother love, and so repulsive a feature as incest." It would indeed displease us if the nonsensical doctrine of Messrs Freud and his friends were taken seriously. And when so wanton an explana-

tion as this is given of literary masterpieces, we can suggest only that its authors should consult the nearest doctor.

"The author," says Mr Mordell, "is more in his work than he suspects." We pity Mr Mordell if he is more deeply implicated in his own book than he pretends. And how shall we treat, save with hellebore, the critic, who cannot cast an innocent eye even upon a piece of machinery? "Why," asks Mr Mordell, "does Kipling have a keen interest in bringing descriptions of machinery into his works? If dreams of machinery relate to sex, then we must follow the logical conclusion that an undue interest in machinery must evince a sexual meaning." Must we indeed? Not unless we are tainted with the sad mania, of which Mr Mordell appears to be a victim.

But Mr Mordell's greatest pride is that he has discovered a personal note in an epic like the 'Iliad,' usually considered impersonal. What sort of a crib, we wonder, did he use when he made this brilliant discovery? The discovery, of course, is no discovery at all. What Mr Mordell has found out is what has always been obvious to all men — that Achilles and Patroclus were friends. Homer, like the artist that he was, drew a beautiful picture of friendship, and he drew it, no doubt, because he had a fine and subtle understanding of what friendship was and meant. We need not go to the jargon of psychoanalysis to appreciate the noble words of Homer. And this is what Mr Mordell says about it: "No, indeed, Homer was no mere spectator reciting Achilles's troubles in an objective manner. He had a great sorrow of his own, and he did not go out of his way to counterfeit one. . . . What the nature of the friendship was we cannot say; it may have been homo-sexual, a love which was common among the later Greeks. But it did have the element of passion. We know now the chief event of Homer's life." For all this nonsense there is, of course, no warrant whatever. Critics, who profit no more than the Freud view from the reading of poetry, should be sternly debarred the use of books. Mr Mordell adds nothing, and could never add anything, to our knowledge of Homer. He does but drag in the obscure suspicion, wherewith his mind is perplexed. He makes no discovery except this: that the disciples of the ineffable Freud and the amateurs of psychoanalysis should refrain their fingers from the masterpieces of literature and their prying eyes from the lives of the poets. There is a kind of printed stuff which would suit their method of inquiry well enough—"a real immoral (or indecent) literature," as Mr Mordell calls it, "where the author allows his savage instincts to come to the surface and trespass on

those aspects of his personality which civilisation should have tamed." These specimens of printed matter, as remote from literature as the advertisement-hoarding, are doubtless within the compass of the understanding of Freud and his school. Mr Mordell does not think ill of them. "Such writings," he says, "should not be condemned offhand just because they stir our moral indignation. They must be interpreted so that we may learn the nature of their authors." For our part, we would condemn all such writings offhand as severely as we would condemn the criticism of Mr Mordell. We have as little desire to see them interpreted as to see the nature of their authors explained. But if they will restrain the disciples of Herr Freud from defacing and defaming the work of great poets, they may have their uses. And when the psychoanalysts have done their worst with these crude examples of savagery, they might be invited to go for the collection of the scandals which are the material of their false philosophy to the jail and the lunatic asylum. No fit haunts for them are the slopes of Parnassus.

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